

Lao PDR: Flash Floods in Attapeu

Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Situation Report No.9

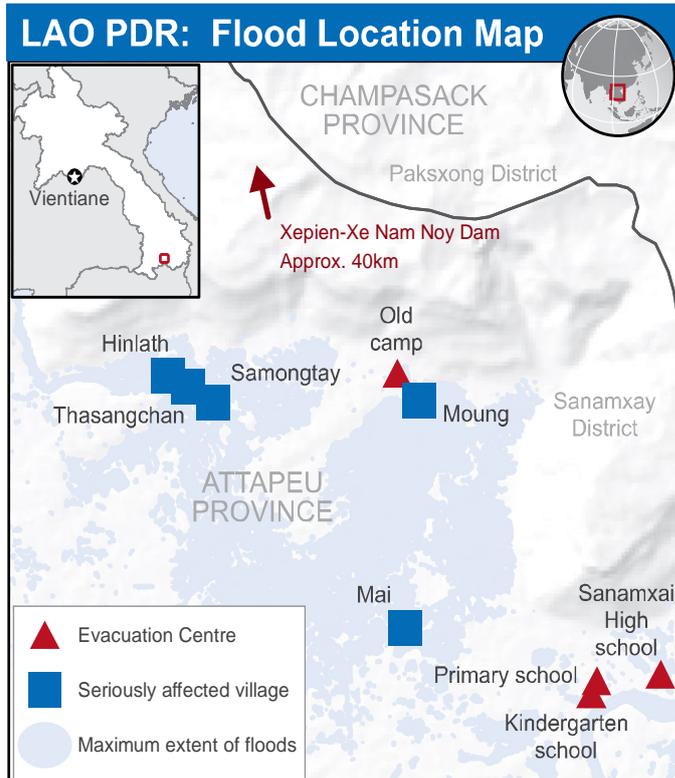
(as of 23 August 2018)



This report is produced by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Lao PDR in collaboration with humanitarian partners. The next report may be issued in two weeks' time on Thursday 6 September 2018.

Highlights

- Last week tropical storm Bebinca hit the North of Laos causing the Mekong's water level to rise. Human impact was minimal. However, forecast seasonal rains will continue to hinder access to camps. Some areas remain accessible only by helicopter. Damaged bridges are being repaired and/or replaced.
- A first lot of temporary shelters to accommodate 150 households is expected to be completed by the end of August. Construction of three other shelters in hard-to-reach locations has not yet started. Emergency shelters are currently overcrowded and space management will be essential to allow the set-up of key infrastructure. Measures are being taken to prevent disease outbreaks.
- The first cross-sectoral coordination meeting between Government and humanitarian partners took place in Attapeu on 23 August. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting may take place in the week of 27 August in Vientiane.
- An assessment of damages and losses across Lao PDR, with focus on Attapeu, is currently being consulted between the Government and key partners such as the UN World Bank and European Union. This may be launched in the coming weeks. The coordination of ongoing rapid assessments remains crucial.
- The Humanitarian Country Team has launched a Disaster Response Plan requesting US\$ 5.6 million to provide life-saving assistance and recovery services to the 13,100 affected people in Sanamxay District. The requirements are expected to increase. To date, US\$ 2.2 million have been pledged towards the plan.



Map Sources: NGD, UNCS, ESA, UNOSAT, IOM
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created by OCHA on 6 August, 2018



39 reported deaths



97 people missing



4,270 people currently living in emergency shelters



13,100 people affected

+ For more information, see "background on the crisis" at the end of the report

Situation Overview



Situation as of 23 August 2018

While authorities are closely monitoring the level of the Mekong River and its tributaries, seasonal rains continue. The rains are affecting the living conditions of people in Attapeu, especially those in the emergency shelters, relief and recovery operations as well as transportation infrastructure and access. Some of the camps are currently overcrowded. People have therefore started setting up tents around the camps and along roads, exposing them to additional mud and rain, hindering heavy vehicles from passing through and obstructing the construction of key infrastructure. Proper site planning, including of the four temporary shelters currently being constructed or in planning, thus continues to be a high priority.

Disease outbreaks are now a real risk and measures are being taken in this regard, including provision of clean water and sanitation, cholera vaccinations and awareness raising on handwashing. 22 Moderate Acute Malnutrition cases and 10 Severe Acute Malnutrition cases have been detected to date, of which most were found in the host communities. Six child friendly spaces have been established in the camps. These are currently being considered as locations for interim schooling.

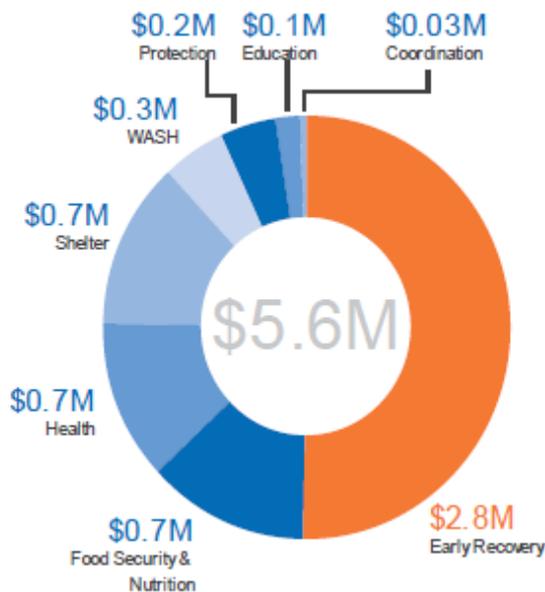
A bridge connecting Attapeu to Sanamxay has collapsed and is now under repair but not passable by vehicles. Other bridges have been damaged. Reportedly, the Government's plan is to repair all damaged bridges with upgraded materials. Sufficient relief goods remain in Sanamxay City to cover immediate needs. Two camps, Pindong and Tamayod, are mainly accessible by air, with land access limited to light vehicles. Ban Bok, 16 km from Sanamxay City, is reachable only via a mud road, with trucks frequently getting stuck. The situation in the remote camps remains particularly challenging. Access to water, sanitation services and electricity for instance is limited. Generators are currently providing power 6-9 pm.

The international community, including United Nations, Red Cross, INGOs and Non-Profit Association partners continue to support the Government's ongoing relief efforts. This includes the provision of Non-Food Items such as tool kits, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, water pumps, filters and thousands of water purification tablets, safe delivery kits, and tents; specific nutrition support and screening for malnutrition; delivery of rice, canned fish and food rations; emergency first aid and health services.

Current response priorities continue to be the provision of food and cooking utensils; clean drinking water; specific items such as bins, water tanks and family kits; health support (delivery of medical equipment and supplies, including vaccination to prevent disease outbreaks, medical teams on the ground to focus on preventing of secondary disease outbreaks and to provide psycho-social counselling); shelter; the rehabilitation of infrastructure, including roads and bridges; and search of missing people. The needs are particularly high in the camps outside Sanamxay City and storekeeping remains a challenge. There are concerns that the host communities will require support in addition to

those displaced, as many families who still live in their own houses have however lost their livelihoods and would be in equal need of assistance. Moreover, the Government may extend its request for support to include other provinces.

Funding



On 7 August, the Humanitarian Country Team launched a Disaster Response Plan to provide life-saving assistance to 13,100 people affected by the flash floods and re-establish their basic livelihoods. The Plan asks for US\$5.6 million in humanitarian relief and recovery support across eight clusters: Education, Food Security and Nutrition, Health, Protection, including Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence, Shelter, including camp management, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Early Recovery and Coordination. Each cluster has consulted respective line ministries and members, including UN agencies and NGOs, to prioritize response activities. The Plan is available online at: <https://reliefweb.int/node/2731894>.

In conjunction with the DRP, Cluster leads is currently elaborating the cluster-specific plans. Donors are requested to discuss these contributions with the cluster leads, detailed below. Humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of in-cash and in-kind contributions by e-mail to fts@un.org. To date around US\$ 2.2 million have been pledged towards the plan, however the funding gaps are expected to increase given the continuing rains. **Interested partners are requested to get in touch with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office or with cluster leads directly.**

Humanitarian Response



Food Security & Nutrition

Needs

The food needs for the total affected population would amount to approximately 160 tons per month. The food situation in the camps has become more critical as access is hampered by heavy rains.

The urgent food and nutrition needs to address are:

- Livestock production including reallocation, vaccines for various animal diseases, water pumps, animal feeding and animal health services.

Response

- donation of AUD 470,000 from the Government of Australia to the UN will help to cover the food needs of the affected population for approximately 1.5 months. Arrangements are made to have the food brought to Attapeu province and start the distribution as soon as possible.
- A rapid joint food security and livelihoods assessment was completed on 17 August. The data is currently being cleaned and reviewed. A preliminary report is expected by 24 August.
- To date, 617 children have been screened for malnutrition using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference measurement. 22 Moderate Acute Malnutrition and 10 Severe Acute Malnutrition cases were identified. The screening continues as not all camps and not the entire host population were covered.
- The National Nutrition Centre has designed a preliminary response plan, covering the response and requirements for the first 3 months and for the 3 months following that.

- Provision of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food and F-75/F-100 to district hospitals and health posts to treat severe acute malnutrition in children under five.

Gaps

- Provision of nutrition support for children under five.
- Quality and supervision of screening for acute malnutrition and treatment for children under five.



Health

Needs

- The most pressing health risks remain potential outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases and dengue. Potential outbreaks of measles, respiratory infections such as influenza, malaria and food-borne diseases are also a concern.
- Disease surveillance continues to pick up cases of diarrhoea, influenza-like illness, rickettsia and dengue.
- Screening has detected a number of tuberculosis cases among those living in the camps. While tuberculosis is endemic in the affected region, the close living conditions in the camps increase the risk of further transmission.
- There is a need to ensure continued access to essential and life-saving health services, including mental health, and maternal and newborn child.
- The Ministry of Health has requested televisions, DVD players and speakers for the promotion of protective health behaviours and mental wellbeing.

Response

- Distribution of Clean Delivery Kits is ongoing as part of reproductive health services to ensure safer pregnancy and childbirth, especially in a situation where health facilities have been damaged or swept away altogether. Reportedly, the district health officer in Sanamxay district conducted two safe deliveries.
- A cholera campaign has started today, with support provided to the Ministry of Health in planning and training. The campaign targets all population above one year old in seven camps, including two hard to reach: Pinding and Tamayod.
- Information, education and communication materials on health and hygiene are being developed, including on handwashing, sanitation, and prevention and management of diarrhea.
- Zinc tablets for use with oral rehydration salts in treatment of diarrhea are available in all medical posts in camps, Sanamxay district hospital and provincial hospital. Materials on the use of Oral Rehydration Salts with zinc are being distributed to all medical posts in camps in Sanamxay.
- Materials on identifying danger signs in children and newborns, and referral to the health providers are being distributed.
- In terms of health services, emergency medical teams are present at each camp, and provincial and district hospitals are functional. However, accessibility to some areas remains an issue.
- Disease surveillance has been established at each camp and reports are being received daily.
- Routine care and delivery kits have been supplied to pregnant women.
- Close monitoring of dengue and malaria is a priority and preventative measures such as fogging, bed nets and source reduction, are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Indoor Residual Spraying insecticide has been procured and is being sent to the affected areas.

Gaps and Constraints

- Training has been conducted at the central level for the Centre for Information and Education for Health, and also in camps. However, engagement with the displaced populations remains low.
- Several villages remain hard to reach and are only accessible by helicopter.
- Further doses of oral cholera vaccines are being requested.



Logistics

Needs

- Continued information on access is important so that updates can be shared with partners. Organizations are encouraged to share information with the cluster.

Response

- A Mobile Storage Unit was installed at WFP's Vientiane warehouse complex and temporarily loaned to the Government who requested additional storage space for relief items. Items continue to arrive in Vientiane and the Government is struggling to accommodate all items. WFP is also continuing to support the Government with information on warehouse best practices such as stock taking and proper stacking.

Gaps

- Even though water levels are slowly receding, the situation is changing daily and it is difficult to predict access issues more than a day in advance.
- One of the 10 bridges connecting Attapeu town to Sanamxay has been washed away. This has temporarily cut off some access between the provincial capital and the district.
- Repair work on the roads connecting Sanamxay with the evacuation camps, which are currently only accessible by helicopter, has begun. However, progress is slow and time consuming.
- Distribution of relief items is taking place but there is still lack of understanding on what is being prioritized for distribution.



Shelter including Camp Management

Needs

- The National Disaster Management Office and partners have covered the shelter distributions in most of the evacuation centers, except limited information regarding Xaidonkhong. The majority are now residing either in the solid buildings or tents around the camps and by the roadside. However, the road sides become a water way when it rains, and residents suffer from the rain water coming into their tents due to the continued heavy rain.
- Kitchen utensils and sleeping sets are major needs in camps according to the head of Primary school and Kindergarten in Mitsamphan.
- Tamayod and Pindong camps require clean water to use and drink, food and other non-food items (sleeping set, clothes, dignity kits, kitchen utensils).
- There is a lack of water and sanitation facilities including bathing space, especially in the Oudomxay, Ban Bok, Pindong and Tamayod camps. Construction of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities continue.
- A shelter needs assessment is required once the initial relief phase is over, to establish damage to housing and public facilities to support partners' and Government response.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Planning has requested partners to contribute to the elaboration of a questionnaire to develop a shelter needs assessment, to be analysed by the designated taskforce.

Response

- Camp management and hygiene conditions of the evacuation centers in Sanamxay continue to be improved by the District Committee and the Camp Coordinators, though the quality of the camp registration remains uneven.
- The Government has identified 4-5 areas to build temporary shelters.
- National Disaster Management Office brought in eight teams from different departments of Attapeu provincial offices, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to conduct damage assessments in 18 villages in Sanamxay from 13 - 21 August.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Planning deployed a task force to the site for immediate relief. A second taskforce, led by the Public Works and Transport Research Institute, may meet in the coming days for discussing

the shelter assessment definition. Cluster partners contributed to this task and sent Ministry of Public works and Transportation a questionnaire to be implemented for shelter assessment.

- A second Displacement Tracking Matrix has been completed in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and other partners, collecting data from the nine temporary shelters with total populations of 955 families/ 4,270 individuals.

Gaps

- Distribution of shelter-related supplies and non-food items remain a challenge as some camps are still hard to reach by land and the demographic information as well as their needs and gaps remain unknown.
- The tropical storm passing through the Southern part of Lao PDR during 13 - 16 August has caused river water to rise and a bridge between Attapeu and Sanamxay to collapse, cutting off road access to the camps. During this time, emergency operations were conducted via boat and helicopter. The roads and bridges are back to passable condition as of 22 August.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs

- The remote camps are now semi-accessible via car, however road conditions remain challenging.
- In terms of sanitation facilities, the immediate needs for the hard-to-reach camps are: 16 temporary latrines units; 16 temporary bath cubicles; and 8 boreholes with hand pumps or dug wells.
- Local volunteers need to be mobilized to promote hygiene in the camps.

Response

- 50,000 aquatabs have been delivered. 200,000 additional tabs will be delivered on 24 August. One aquatab can treat 5 liters of clear water at point of use.
- A local drilling company has been contacted to drill boreholes with handpumps in Tamayod.
- 5 boreholes have been built in Ban Bok, to provide clean water. Instruction in Lao Language on the use of chlorine tablets are provided to the displaced population.
- 7 latrines have been constructed in Ban Bok camp.
- Soap, tarpaulins, buckets, bowls and water jerry cans have been distributed to all camps except those difficult to access.
- Four water filter machines with a capacity of 700 liters per hour have been installed in Tamayod.
- The distribution of new 1,200 hygiene kits among the affected populations has been completed.
- Two UN specialists on water sanitation and hygiene promotion have been deployed to provide technical support to the Government.
- Water sanitation and hygiene material has been printed and sent to the emergency zone.
- Provision of water and sanitation in difficult to reach camps, such as Pingdong continues.

Gaps

- Access to three camps – Ban Bok, Pingdong and Tamayod – continues to be limited, and therefore the water sanitation and hygiene situation there remains critical. More sanitation facilities are needed.
- Sanitation facilities in some villages have been destroyed and, thus, the situation of host communities in terms is to be re-assessed.
- De-sludging of pits is a challenge. The truck used for this task has broken down.
- Kindergarten camps need more latrines.
- Water sample testing protocol/standard needs to be followed. Plastic water bottles have been used to collect water samples to test for key parameters, which is problematic.



Education

Needs

- 13 schools affected with over 1,800 students (more than 1,200 in 11 primary schools and about 600 in two secondary schools). 56 teachers affected. One school is totally destroyed. Five schools are currently used as emergency shelters. About 5,400 textbooks, and 3,100 desks in those schools damaged.
- As the new school year starts in September, there is a pressing need to have short-term and longer-term planning to ensure all affected school-aged children have access to quality education opportunities (formal/non-formal) in time.
- Planning is also necessary for school-aged children in the host communities whose schools will continue to be used as temporary shelters beyond August.

Response

- Data collection for planning of the return to school is underway, led by the Ministry and supported by development partners. Further detailed assessment is being planned to be conducted by a Ministry of Education and Sports-development partners joint team in the next weeks.
- In linkage with the child protection response for child friendly spaces, and in coordination with the Government, support for Early Childhood Development / Early Childhood Education is currently being provided in six accessible camps, alongside psychosocial support. Teams deployed on the ground will use interventions in child friendly spaces as a platform to ensure that children get prepared for getting back to school.
- Discussions are ongoing with Ministry of Education and Sports and local authorities for planning the new school year.

Gaps

- Data collection and child-friendly spaces establishment in difficult to access camps.
- Concrete action plans for the full school registration of affected children and their continuous school attendance, and the operationalization of schools in time for the beginning of the school-year.
- Concrete action plans for the necessary support for school-aged children in the host communities for full school registration and continuous school attendance.



Protection

Needs

- There are protection concerns in the camps, and protection mechanisms to ensure safety and security of women and children are required.
- There is a risk of gender-based violence and abuse against women for which mitigation measures are required.
- Community participation mechanisms in the disaster response is required, including protecting displaced people by improving community-driven mechanisms that safeguard against gender-based violence and ensuring survivors the access to life-saving interventions
- Psychological support for people affected, including women, girls and boys.
- Spaces for children to play and learn.

Response

Six Child Friendly Spaces have been established and already operating.

- A UN Gender-Based Violence specialist is in country for a two-month deployment to provide technical support to and handle gender-based violence coordination for Protection Cluster.
- Health facility mapping to provide life-saving clinical care for sexual violence in Vientiane has been completed by the Ministry of Public Health. Mapping in the Sanamxay district hospital and province hospital is still

ongoing. Mapping of other sectors service such as social, psychosocial and legal services to be completed with support from the members of INGO network.

- The Protection Cluster continues to provide technical assistance to Lao Red Cross on the methodology and tools for their upcoming assessment in Attapeu province to ensure that protection risks and concerns will be captured. The assessment was postponed for better preparation of the team.

Gaps

- Coordination between protection cluster with local and central government need to be strengthened to avoid duplication in intervention. Protection cluster can collaborate and support similar activities to support vulnerable children.
- Mapping of available services for gender-based violence victims and survivors has yet to be conducted. Safe, confidential and appropriate systems of care for gender-based violence victims and survivors have yet to be identified and disseminated to affected communities.

General Coordination

The Government of Lao PDR is leading and coordinating the response operation through the National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) chaired by the Vice Prime Minister. The Disaster Management Division within the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is the lead coordinator.

To support the Government, the Humanitarian Country Team has activated eight clusters for the flood response plan in Attapeu. Each cluster coordinates with its designated line ministry's counterpart. The UN Resident Coordinator coordinates and provides overall direction to the HCT while the UN Resident Coordinator's Office provides inter-cluster coordination support. A field coordinator to support coordination with Government and between sectors and clusters has travelled to Attapeu to support inter-cluster coordination in the field. The first cross-sectoral coordination meeting between Government and humanitarian partners took place in Attapeu on 23 August. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting is foreseen to take place in the week of 27 August in Vientiane.

An assessment of damages and losses across Lao PDR, with focus on Attapeu, is currently being consulted between the Government and key partners such as UNDP, World Bank and European Union. This may be launched in the coming weeks. The coordination of ongoing rapid assessments remains crucial. Please see below the leads of the respective clusters.

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Background on the crisis

During July and August 2018, Tropical Storms Son-Tinh and Bebinca caused heavy rains and flooding in 79 districts of 14 provinces across Lao PDR. According to the Government, over 82,460 families are affected by these floods so far. 62,980 hectares of rice fields and 41,879 hectares of other crops have been flooded, thousands of livestock have died. In addition to seasonal flooding, an unprecedented flash flood occurred on 24 July in Attapeu Province due to water discharge from the Xepien-Xe Nam Noy Dam. Over five billion cubic meters of water inundated an estimated 55,000 hectares of land. In Sanamxay District, the flash flood affected 13,100 people and displaced 6,000 people. Access to affected communities is hampered by floods, mud and UXO contamination of the area. The rainy season typically lasts from July to September and flooding across the country may therefore spread further.

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