

# Alert

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India – No. 13/2010

## ACT mobilizes response to severe cyclonic storm Laila

Geneva, 20 May 2010

### Description of the emergency

The eastern states of Andhra Pradesh, Bengal and Orissa are in a state of alert as heavy rains accompanied by fierce winds battered coastal districts on Wednesday ahead of Cyclone Laila. Laila is said to be the worst storm in 14 years and has been classified as "severe". The cyclone is set to make a landfall close to Machilipatnam in the late afternoon or evening today. The Indian Meteorological Department forecasts that the cyclonic system is then likely to move north-eastwards across Orissa and Bengal.

The cyclone is expected to generate wind speeds of up to 125 kmph and heavy rainfall of up to 25 cm or more in the coastal region over the next 36 hours. Low-lying districts of coastal Andhra Pradesh are vulnerable to flooding due to the likelihood of storm surge of up to two metres above the astronomical tide at the time of landfall (India Meteorological Department). 777 villages in 73 mandals have been identified by local authorities as most vulnerable to the cyclone. The Chief Minister on May 20, 2010 at 1330 hrs reported that 548 mandals in 11 districts had already been badly affected due to the intense rain. Due to loss of power supply in 1490 villages, he stated that the drinking water supplies are badly affected. Further disruption of transport and washing away of thatched huts is expected.

### National response

Coastal district ministers have been directed by the chief minister, K. Roasaiah, to oversee rescue and relief operations in their areas. Andhra Pradesh Authorities have already evacuated 30,000 people out of 1.1 million people who are the most vulnerable to the impending disaster. Where some people used to storms are refusing to be evacuated, the authorities have requested the District Collectors to use force if necessary. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has deployed 550 persons with 80 boats and search and rescue equipment to the districts of Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Machilipatnam, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore. The number of boats may be increased to 1100 if needed. A major relief camp has been set up by the local authorities in Machilipatnam.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea and all major ports in Andhra Pradesh are on high alert. Reliance Industries suspended crude oil and gas production from its Krishna Godavari basin MA fields in the Bay of Bengal as a precautionary measure.

**ACT response**

ACT members CASA and Lutheran World Federation associate programme, LWS India Trust are closely monitoring the situation, including assessment of whether a request for an international ACT appeal or Rapid Response Funding might be required.

CASA has alerted its Disaster Mitigation task forces and Zonal and Project Offices to be on standby to provide assistance to the communities in case external assistance is required.

LWF/LWSIT is in contact with the Church of South India working in coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh to gather information and a task force has been formed to make a preliminary assessment. LWSIT has operational projects in both Orissa and West Bengal and in the eventuality of these states being severely affected by the cyclone, expect a relief intervention will be required.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jessie Kgoroadira, ACT Chief Finance Officer ([jkg@actalliance.org](mailto:jkg@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

**For further information please contact:**

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