CYCLONE DITWAH
Joint Rapid Needs Assessment

Phase 1 - Preliminary Scoping

2 December 2025

1. Situation Overview

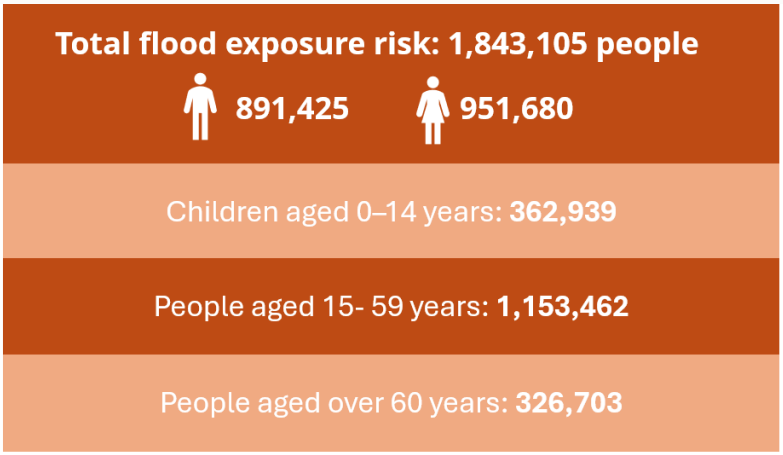
Cyclone Ditwah struck Sri Lanka on 27 November 2025, bringing torrential rains and strong winds that caused severe flooding, landslides, and widespread destruction across all 25 districts. Its slow movement produced prolonged rainfall exceeding 350 mm within 24 hours in some areas, and the rainy conditions continued for four consecutive days, resulting in catastrophic flooding, slope failures, and extensive damage to homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods, making it one of the worst disasters in decades.

Although intense rainfall has eased in many districts since 29 November, flooding continues to worsen in several low-lying and downstream areas due to sustained high river discharge, overflow of river basins, and delayed downstream flow even after the rains have subsided. The Department of Irrigation has extended flood warnings for the next 48 hours for the Kelani and Mahaweli River basins, noting that water levels are still rising despite reduced rainfall, while the Meteorology Department has cautioned that runoff from saturated highland catchments will continue moving downstream, prolonging inundation in vulnerable areas.

- **Population:** As per the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) situation update of 2 December 2025 (10:00 AM), **1,466,615 people have been affected, with 410 confirmed fatalities and 336 individuals reported missing**. Search and rescue efforts are ongoing.
- **Food Security and Agriculture:** Floods have worsened risks, leaving **1.5 million people** in districts classified as moderate to high food insecurity risk. Flooding has caused severe crop losses, disrupted inland fisheries and shrimp farming, and damaged fishing vessels and landing sites. Livestock farmers face feed shortages, damaged shelters, and higher disease risks. Markets are heavily affected, with major economic hubs damaged and transport routes cut, limiting access to food and essentials. Vegetable prices have **spiked by 30%–200%** due to supply shortages, while rice and dhal show slight increases, requiring ongoing monitoring to support food security efforts.

- **Housing and shelter**: As per DMC situation update of 2 December 2025 (10:00 AM), **233,015 persons and 64,483 families are sheltered in 1,441 safety centres. 565 are reported to be fully damaged, while 20,271 are reported to be partially damaged.**
- **Roads and power:** As of 1 December 2025, **78 roads** and **15 bridges** have been damaged, and **277,877 buildings** have been inundated. Over **65,000** power outages and telecom failures have been reported.
- **Health and Nutrition**: Several hospitals remain flooded or damaged, limiting access to essential care and requiring the evacuation of critically ill patients. Maternal, Child, Sexual and Reproductive Health services are severely disrupted, and mental-health needs are rising among affected communities. Overcrowded safety centres also struggle to support pregnant and lactating women, with inadequate privacy, safe breastfeeding spaces, and access to clean water and nutrition.
- **WASH:** Major water supply schemes, treatment plants, and rural systems are damaged or submerged, causing severe service interruptions. High turbidity, contamination, and power outages prevent restoration.
- **Education:** Schools have been damaged by landslides and floods or converted into shelters. The A/L examinations have been postponed indefinitely. Early childhood development centres have remained closed since 28 November.
- **Poverty:** The cyclone exacerbates existing vulnerabilities: 23% of the population was already living in poverty, with another 10% at risk of falling below the poverty line during crises. Loss of livelihoods, rising costs, and service disruptions disproportionately affect low-income households, women, children, and older persons.

Estimation from the joint needs assessment of populations exposed to floods:



Above figures are estimates from GIS-based methods

2. Purpose and Methodology

Purpose: The Phase 1 Preliminary Scoping assessment aims to deliver a “good enough” snapshot of the situation within the first 72 hours after a disaster, addressing the initial information gap. This assessment relies on:

- Most recent available data
- Pre-disaster secondary information
- Sector experts’ qualitative observations

Its primary purpose is to provide a solid basis for operational decision-making in highly challenging and complex environments. Information gathered during this phase is continuously validated and refined as new data becomes available from stakeholders, sector-specific assessments, or multi-sectoral assessments conducted later.

Key characteristics of Phase 1 include:

- Rapid estimation of immediate, short-term, and medium-term needs
- Use of secondary data, hazard exposure data (e.g., flood maps), and expert judgment
- Identification of data gaps to inform the next phase of field-based rapid joint assessments
- Progressive updates and fine-tuning of initial estimates, communicated through sequential reports

This preliminary stage does not aim for exhaustive detail but provides actionable insights to guide urgent need planning until more comprehensive assessments are completed by sectors.

Methodology: The assessment consolidates data from the Disaster Management Centre, Department of Census and Statistics, International Water Management Institute, Ministries and humanitarian partners. Satellite imagery and Geographic Information System (GIS)-based methods were applied to estimate flood extent and landslide exposure. This involved overlaying rainfall and flood-extent data with elevation, river networks, and administrative boundaries to understand the movement of water from higher ground into low-lying areas. By intersecting these layers with population, building, road networks, water supply schemes, schools, and health facilities, the assessment produced indicative estimates of the number of people, households, and critical services affected. Sectoral inputs from government agencies and UN partners informed analysis of impacts on shelter, WASH, health, protection, education and food security. Due to ongoing access challenges and communication disruptions, this rapid needs assessment (RNA) presents preliminary findings that will be refined as field verification becomes possible.

Limitations of the RNA: The RNA was conducted during the immediate aftermath of the disaster, and several limitations can be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Due to time constraints and restricted access to affected locations, the assessment relied heavily on rapid field observations and secondary information, which may not fully capture the extent of the damage. Some areas remained inaccessible because of blocked roads, safety risks, and disrupted communication networks, limiting data coverage. Household-level information was not collected systematically, resulting in gaps in understanding specific vulnerabilities, especially for women, children, elderly persons, and people with disabilities. Sectoral data from line agencies were still being updated, leading to inconsistencies in reported figures. In addition, the RNA focuses on

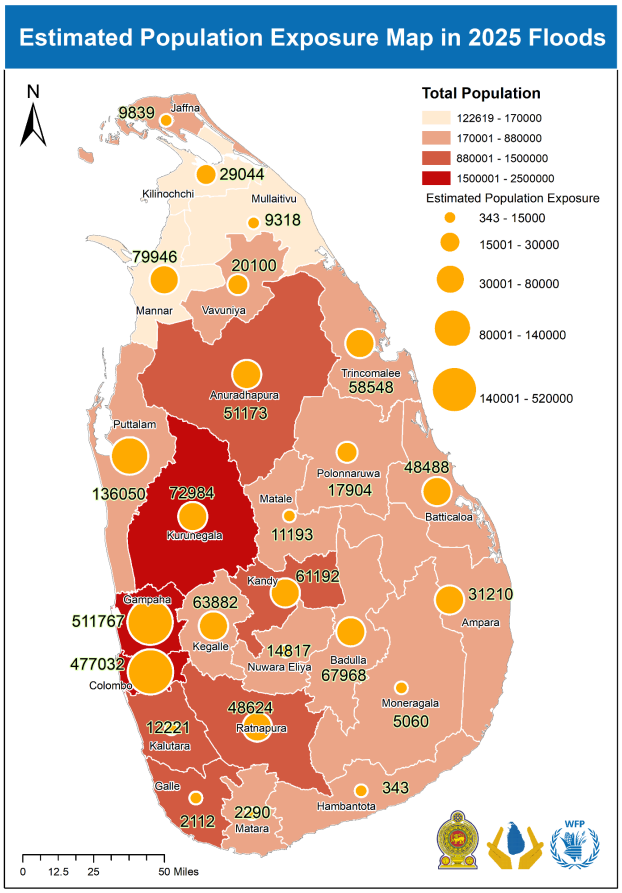
immediate impacts and does not assess medium or long-term recovery needs. These limitations highlight the need for comprehensive follow-up assessments, detailed field surveys, and triangulation with more reliable datasets.

3. Impact and Affected areas

This section synthesises available secondary data, sector expert opinions and GIS-based exposure analysis to estimate the potential impact on populations, infrastructure and services. Reported data is included where available, and estimated numbers using GIS-modelling are included where appropriate.

3.1 Population exposed to flood

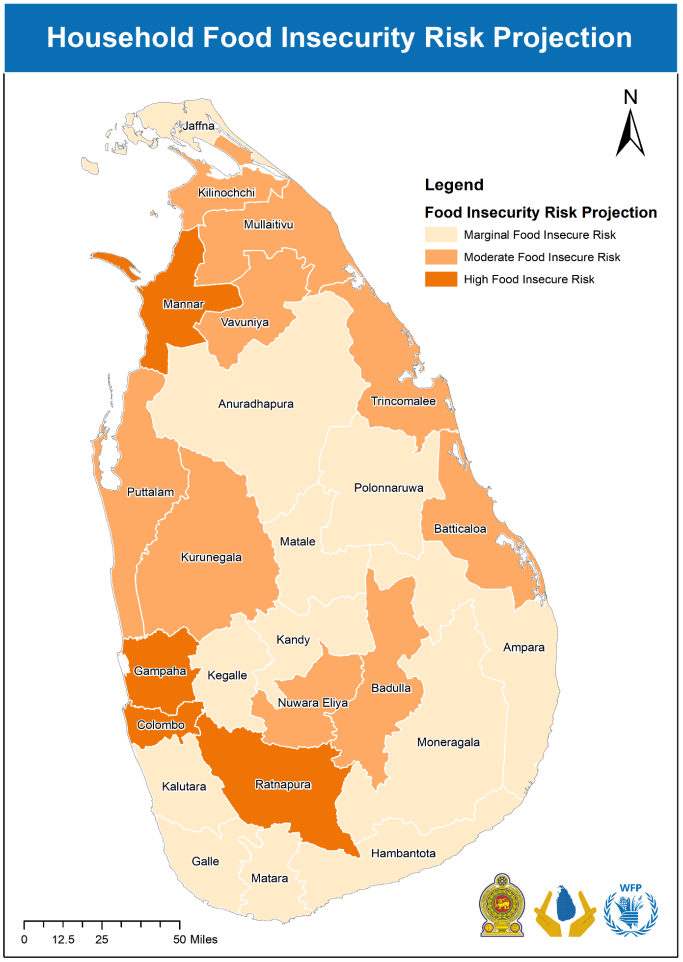
As of 02 December 2025, a total of 1,466,615[1] people have been affected across all districts and 33,015 persons and 64,483 families have been displaced into 1,441 safety centres. GIS modelling estimates approximately **1,843,105**[2] people (**Male - 891,425 and Female 951,680**) are living in areas at risk of flooding, including **362,939 children (0–14 years), 1,153,462 people aged 15–59 years, and 326,703 older persons (60+ years)** who may be exposed to rising water levels, delayed downstream inundation, or secondary hazards such as landslides.



[1] Affected population reported by the NDRSC as of 2nd December 2025
[2] Estimataion population exposure to flood in risk

3.2 Food Security and Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock

Household Food Security: As of December 2024, WFP reported that 16% of households across the country were acutely food insecure (moderate or severe). This is an improvement when compared to September 2023, primarily due to improved food availability and household purchasing power.



Despite this progress, inadequate food consumption persists, with 38% of households resorting to livelihood-based coping strategies, highlighting high volatility in food security and limited resilience to shocks.

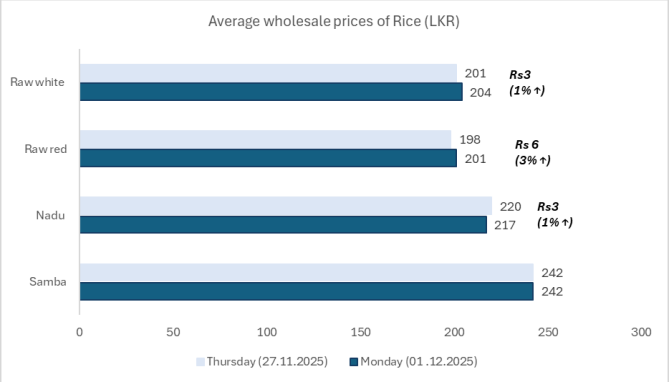
The recent cyclone has significantly worsened underlying vulnerabilities. The combined effects of floods and landslides have disrupted livelihoods, destroyed assets, damaged homes, and restricted access to food and essential services, increasing displacement risks.

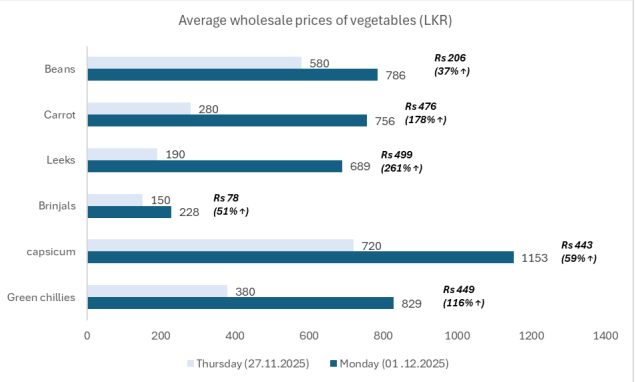
To quantify exposure, a **Household Food Insecurity Risk Index** was developed. This index classifies districts as being at marginal, moderate or high risk of food insecurity. The results are based on a combination of the latest 2024 food insecurity estimates with the projected flood exposure. Initial findings indicate that districts classified at high and moderate risk of food insecurity account for approximately **1.5[3] million people.**

Market Functionality: Market functionality is a critical indicator for evaluating food security in flood-affected areas. Most of the 15 major economic centers have suffered significant infrastructure damage, disrupting food and essential supply chains. Around 200 roads and 10 bridges have been destroyed, severely limiting food supply chains and household access to markets. Vegetable markets are operating at reduced capacity, while supermarket chains remain partially functional, with outlets in highly affected areas closed. Transport of vegetables from Nuwara Eliya, a key production zone, to major markets is restricted. Consequently, vegetable prices **have surged by**

[3] Data Note: This index provides an early-stage estimation. Populations exposed to climate hazards (flood) and food insecurity vulnerability used for estimating the household food insecurity risk projection.

30%–200% due to limited supply and crop damage. Prices of rice and dhal have increased slightly (2%–3%) within 5–6 days. Other field crops, such as potatoes and onions, show moderate price increases. Continuous monitoring of market operations and price trends is essential to assess the flood impact on household food security and inform response planning.





Agriculture Sector: The *Maha* season has been severely affected, with major losses to both paddy and other field crops. Prior to the cyclone, an estimated **563,950 ha** of paddy cultivated by **774,996 farmers** (Department of Agrarian Development) were at critical growth stages. Large areas are now submerged or waterlogged following intense and prolonged rainfall, resulting in substantial expected yield losses. While paddy fields are generally prone to short-term flooding, the extent of damage varies widely depending on growth stage at the time of inundation.

In addition, approximately 95,799 ha of other field crops (OFCs) and 13,463 ha of vegetables, such as maize, pulses, bananas, and various vegetable crops (CROPIX, Department of Agriculture), have suffered extensive damage due to flooding, prolonged inundation, and wind impact.

FAO, together with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agrarian Development, is currently conducting field-level verification to generate accurate, district-specific damage estimates. These findings will inform recovery planning, input provision, and early livelihood restoration for affected farming households.

Livestock: The livestock sector, including poultry, has likely experienced significant disruption, although comprehensive field data are still being collected by government authorities. Key potential impacts include:

- **Animal and poultry mortality** resulting from flooding, high winds, and the collapse of poorly reinforced shelters.
- **Loss of fodder, feed stocks, and grazing land**, as pastures and stored feed may have been submerged or contaminated.
- **Damage to critical livestock infrastructure**, including shelters, water points, and feeding systems, limiting farmers' ability to resume operations.
- **Heightened risk of disease outbreaks**, with stagnant water, overcrowding, and stress conditions increasing susceptibility to infections.
- **Disruption of supply chains**, affecting access to markets, veterinary services, breeding inputs, and transport links.
- **Significant economic losses for smallholder farmers**, undermining household income, nutrition, and overall food security in the affected areas.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector: The fisheries and aquaculture sectors have been severely affected. According to the Ministry of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources (MOF) many small fiberglass boats used in coastal fisheries, including nearly **200 outboard motor boats, canoes, and traditional crafts,** have been damaged, along with an undetermined number of multiday vessels operating in the high seas.

The inland fisheries sector has suffered extensive losses due to damage to seasonal and perennial reservoirs and the escape of stocked fish following flooding. Several fish-culture cages were damaged or washed away, and NAQDA Aquaculture Development Centres (AQDCs) are also likely to have been affected.

Aquaculture operations, including ornamental fish farms, shrimp farms, seaweed units, and sea-cucumber sites—have incurred significant losses due to inundation and damage to infrastructure and production systems. Fish landing sites and fishery harbours may have sustained structural damage, further constraining fishing activities and post-harvest handling. FAO is working with the MOF to obtain accurate, validated, sector-specific damage assessments to support effective recovery planning.

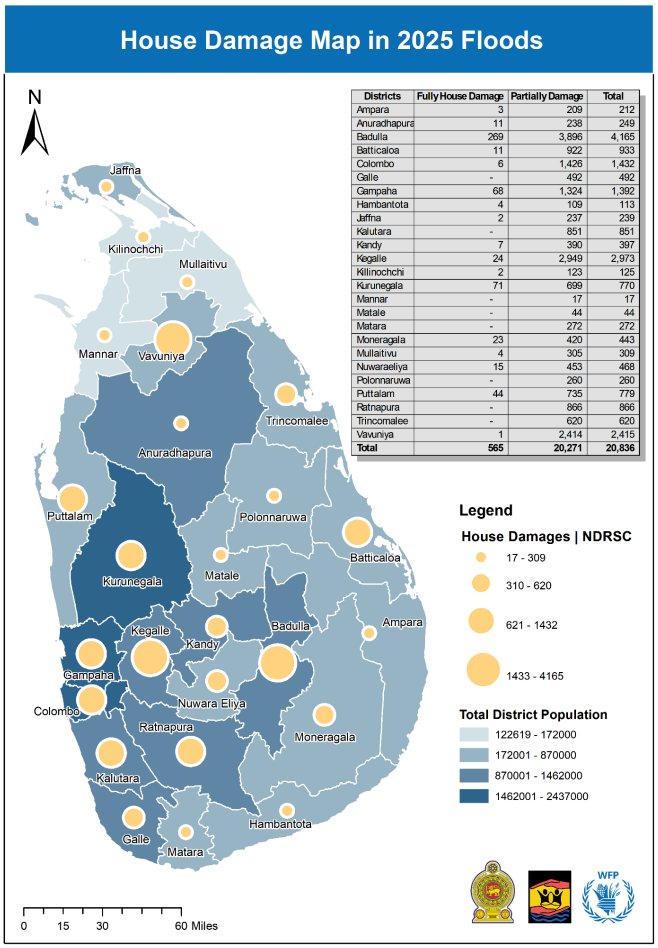
Supply chain disruption: Supply chains across the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sectors have been severely disrupted due to damaged transportation networks, storage facilities, markets, and communication channels. Farmers are unable to move produce to markets, resulting in post-harvest losses and reduced income. Damaged farm roads and blocked access routes are delaying the delivery of seeds, fertilizers, veterinary supplies, and livestock feed, interrupting seasonal cultivation and recovery efforts. Destruction of storage and cooling facilities has caused spoilage of perishable crops, while market closures and communication breakdown have hindered coordination between producers, buyers, and suppliers. These disruptions are weakening rural livelihoods, contributing to food insecurity, and slowing recovery across affected farming and fishing communities.

3.3 Housing and Shelter

As per the DMC situation update on 02 December 2025, 10:00 A.M, 565 houses are fully damaged and 20,271 are partially damaged with Badulla, Kegalle, Vavuniya, Colombo, and Gampaha districts most affected. Damage to Housing is still evolving due to the ongoing flooding and inaccessibility to landslide-affected sites.

A total of **233,015 persons and 64,483 families** are currently seeking temporary shelter in **1,441** government-run safety centres, with over 100 shelters each in Puttalam, Badulla, Colombo, Kegalle, Kandy and Gampaha. In areas where flood water has receded, people in safety centres have returned to their residences, with numbers expected to further reduce in districts where floodwater is receding. Some districts show a sudden increase in the number of active safety centres between 29 November and 01 December, indicating rapid-onset displacement. Reporting is still ongoing, and the figures are expected to change as rescue operations continue and more data on the shelters becomes accessible.

Due to severe accessibility limitations, several communities in the most affected areas have established their own temporary shelters that are not yet captured in official reporting, further contributing to the likelihood of under-reported figures at this stage.

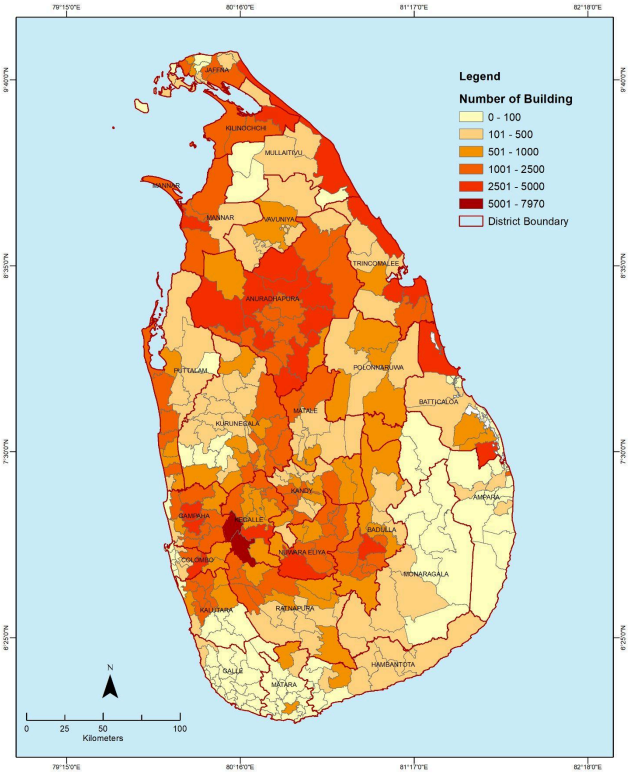


Districts	Fully House Damage	Partially Damage	Total
Ampara	3	209	212
Anuradhapura	11	238	249
Badulla	269	3,896	4,165
Batticaloa	11	922	933
Colombo	6	1,426	1,432
Galle	-	492	492
Gampaha	68	1,324	1,392
Hambantota	4	109	113
Jaffna	2	237	239
Kalutara	-	851	851
Kandy	7	390	397
Kegalle	24	2,949	2,973
Kilinochchi	2	123	125
Kurunegala	71	699	770
Mannar	-	17	17
Matale	-	44	44
Matara	-	272	272
Moneragala	23	420	443
Mullaitivu	4	305	309
Nuwaraeliya	15	453	468
Polonnaruwa	-	260	260
Puttalam	44	735	779
Ratnapura	-	866	866
Trincomalee	-	620	620
Vavuniya	1	2,414	2,415
Total	**565**	**20,271**	**20,836**

In addition, the updated landslide hazard advisories by the National Building Research Organization (NBRO) identify large portions of Badulla, Kandy, Kegalle, Nuwara Eliya, Ratnapura, and Matale as under Level 2 (Amber) and Level 3 (Red) alerts, signaling high probability of continued ground movement, slope failure, and habitation risks over the coming weeks. In landslide affected districts of Kandy, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Kurunegala, Kegalle and Monaragala, affected households will require long term durable temporary/transitional shelter solutions until suitable low risk lands and resources are allocated for housing reconstruction. Moreover NBRO and government authorities will be required to identify suitable land for temporary/transitional shelters.

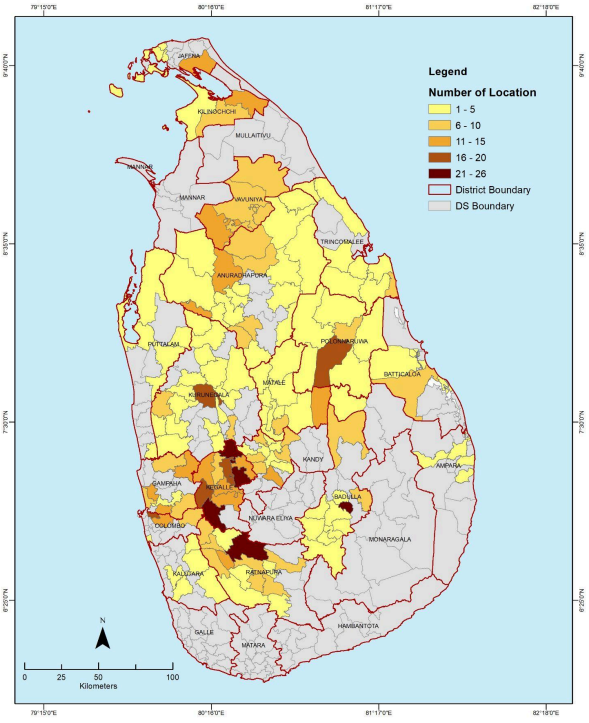
A preliminary scan of shelter environments shows a **high variation in Non-Food Item (NFI) availability**, where some centres, particularly those closer to major towns, have adequate access to basic items, while more remote centres report severe shortages of essentials. Local authorities from Kandy, Badulla, Kurunegala and Kegalle have requested for **tents/huts and sheltering materials, water, sanitary needs, cookware, kitchen items, mats and sheets,** where many households have lost essential needs such as bedding, cookware, and WASH items. Overcrowded safety centres highlight the need for rapid expansion of temporary shelters.

Exposed Buildings by DS Division – November 2025 Flood Event



Map Description
This map was developed using the OSM building layer, combined with flood analysis provided by IWMI and UN-SPIDER.

Distribution of Safety Locations by DS Division – 30 November 2025



Data source: National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC), 30 November 2025

3.4 Protection

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a critical concern, as GBV risk are heightened during emergencies. According to the Women's Wellbeing Survey (2019), **1 in 4 women** in Sri Lanka have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since age 15 by a partner or non-partner**,** and **2 in 5 women** have experienced physical, sexual, emotional, and/or economic violence and/or controlling behaviours by a partner in their lifetime. Overcrowded shelters, limited lighting, and shared WASH facilities, breakdown of social protection mechanisms and separation from family members, heighten GBV risks, particularly for adolescent girls, older women, and persons with disabilities.

Preliminary assessments also highlight overcrowding in government-run safety centres and inadequate basic protection measures and limited Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), especially for women and children who lack access to safe spaces and structured recreational or safe-space activities. Partners also report elevated mental-health stress among children, women, young people, and first responders.

Exclusion risks are noted for **persons with disabilities, around 250 refugees, and asylum seekers,** including 43 asylum-seeking children and seven female-headed households in Negombo and Gampaha districts, who face pre-existing access challenges.

Child protection concerns are increasing due to overcrowded shelters, limited child-friendly spaces, and reduced capacity of the child-protection workforce caused by connectivity and access constraints. Although no confirmed cases of child separation have been reported, **the risk remains high**, and the Child Protection Helpline (1929) is expected to receive more calls as networks are restored. Children in institutional care have also been affected, with relocations in Uva, North Central, and Western Provinces, and evacuation readiness underway in the Eastern Province. The Department of Probation and Child Care Services is gathering additional data on emerging concerns.

3.5 Health and Nutrition

Health-service delivery remains affected to varying degrees across all 25 districts, with several facilities inaccessible or functioning at reduced capacity. Several Divisional Hospitals and Primary Medical Care Units have reported infrastructure damage, including roof collapse, partial inundated wards with debris, and partial or complete loss of electricity and water.

Kandy and Badulla Hospitals experienced "isolated incidents" of inundation, alongside facilities in the central hill country where landslides were prevalent. UN OCHA reported that floodwaters entered multiple hospitals, forcing critically ill patients to be airlifted to functioning facilities. Chilaw Hospital has also been evacuated and remains closed. A considerable number of Divisional Hospitals and Primary Medical Care Units (PMCUs) in Gampaha, Colombo, and Puttalam districts - flood-prone districts, have been affected. Medical and Public Health staff, including Medical Officers of Health and Public Health Inspectors, continue providing life-saving care and conducting sanitation, hygiene and food safety monitoring in safety centres.

Using the MISP calculator, UNFPA estimates that **approximately 40,152 pregnant women** are among the affected population and will require uninterrupted access to maternal, newborn, and sexual and reproductive health services. Service disruptions, damaged facilities, and displacement

have increased the risks of unassisted deliveries, pregnancy complications, and limited access to family-planning services.

This widespread damage has reduced local food production and supply of food, while transportation blockages and market closures have restricted food availability and access. Combined with mass displacement, these disruptions place households at increased risk of acute nutritional vulnerabilities.

Vulnerable groups, particularly under-five children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, and people with disabilities and the elderly, face heightened risks of malnutrition as regular diet intake and supplementary nutrition sources, including *Thriposha* are unavailable. Ongoing disruptions to maternal and child health services further exacerbate these risks.

3.6 Transportation - Road & Railway Infrastructure

78 roads and 15 bridges were damaged or rendered temporarily impassable, particularly in the Western Province and several landslide-prone districts in the hill country and flood-prone areas. Road impacts range from flooded to collapsed sections and damaged bridge approaches, causing partial or complete loss of access in some areas. In parallel, railway infrastructure has also suffered significant disruption: several key lines experienced track flooding, embankment failures, and earth slips, leading to suspension or reduced daily turns from 200 to 74, and has been interrupted 4 main lines out of 9 throughout the country. As of now, emergency clearance is ongoing, with some services and primary roads gradually reopening, but full restoration of safe, reliable connectivity for both road and rail will require extensive short-term repairs and longer-term reconstruction in the most heavily damaged corridors.[4]

3.7 Education

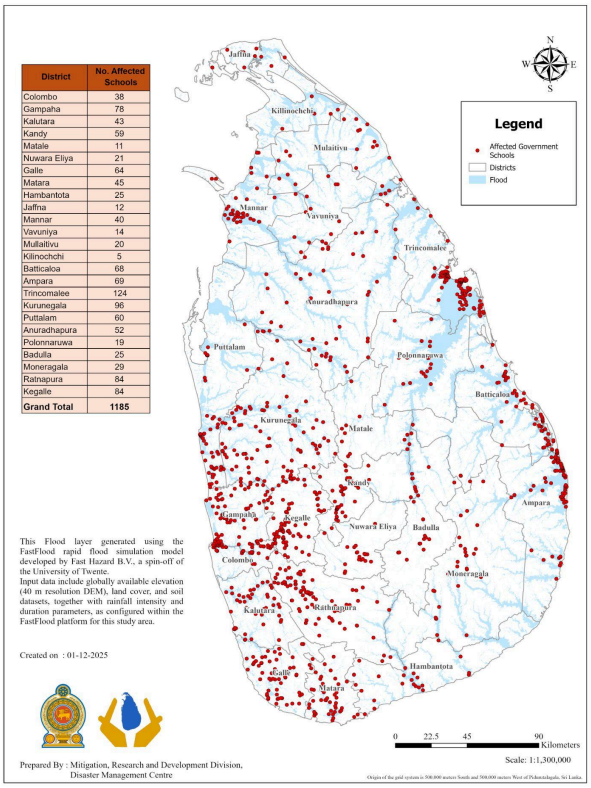
The disaster has significantly disrupted education services nationwide, with many preschools and schools inundated, damaged, or functioning as safety shelters, and the full extent of the impact is still under assessment. Schools were closed for public examinations at the time of the disaster and were scheduled to reopen on 15 December 2025; however, widespread infrastructure damage is likely to delay reopening, jeopardizing continuity of learning. The General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) examinations, which commenced in mid-November, have been postponed indefinitely due to severe weather conditions. Additionally, numerous schools are housing displaced families, and all early childhood development centres, including preschools, have remained closed since 28 November 2025.

GIS modelling indicates that **1,185 schools are located within flood-affected areas**, though school type and student capacity are not yet available. Trincomalee District has **over 120 affected schools**, followed by **96 in Kurunegala, 84 each in Ratnapura and Kegalle, and 78 in Gampaha**. Immediate infrastructure support will be required in the most affected districts to enable safe reopening and the continuation of learning.

[4] Government schools exposure to the flood

Affected Government Schools by District – Sri Lanka

District	No. Affected Schools
Colombo	38
Gampaha	78
Kalutara	43
Kandy	59
Matale	11
Nuwara Eliya	21
Galle	64
Matara	45
Hambantota	25
Jaffna	12
Mannar	40
Vavuniya	14
Mullaitivu	20
Kilinochchi	5
Batticaloa	68
Ampara	69
Trincomalee	124
Kurunegala	96
Puttalam	60
Anuradhapura	52
Polonnaruwa	19
Badulla	25
Moneragala	29
Ratnapura	84
Kegalle	84
Grand Total	**1185**



This Flood layer generated using the FastFlood rapid flood simulation model developed by Fast Hazard B.V., a spin-off of the University of Twente.
Input data include globally available elevation (40 m resolution DEM), land cover, and soil datasets, together with rainfall intensity and duration parameters, as configured within the FastFlood platform for this study area.

Created on : 01-12-2025

Prepared By : Mitigation, Research and Development Division, Disaster Management Centre

3.8 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Approximately 622 water-supply schemes, including intake points and treatment facilities, fall within inundation zones, and 540 water treatment plants are directly affected. Overall, **687 major urban water schemes** are reported to be damaged and **235,875 household connections** (more than 47% of connections) are disrupted, with the highest concentrations in **Sabaragamuwa, Eastern, Uva, and Central Provinces**. Around 70% - 80% of water supply is disrupted in Badulla, Kandy, Puttalam, Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya.

Rural systems are similarly affected, with **537 community-managed schemes** damaged and widespread inundation of dug wells, heightening waterborne disease risks. Burst transmission lines, flooded intakes, and submerged treatment plants have led to high turbidity and contamination, while critical infrastructure such as pump houses and generator rooms remain underwater, delaying repairs. Power outages have further impeded pumping, treatment, and distribution.

Demand for bottled water among displaced populations is high, but supply is constrained as bottling plants have been flooded. Several major sewer treatment plants are non-functional, and damage to sanitation facilities remains unassessed. Restoration efforts face significant challenges, including restricted access, power failures, shortages of treatment chemicals, and limited availability of water bowsers.

4. Priority Humanitarian Needs

Population	Population exposed to flooding (Estimated)
Total population	1,843,105
Male	891,425
Female	951,680
Children (0 - 14 years)	362,939
15 - 59 years	1,153,462
Older persons (60 years & above)	326,703
Women of reproductive age	250,951
Pregnant women	40,152

4.1 Housing and Shelter

Emergency Repair Needs for returnees

- Emergency repair materials for partially damaged houses, including roof sheets, timber, fibre-cement sheets/plyboards, and tools.
- Temporary hut-type structures for returnees with fully damaged homes.
- Basic electrical repairs, including wiring and light bulbs.
- Debris clearance and cleaning support to make homes and business premises safe for return.
- Waste removal and establishment of temporary waste-management systems in high-impact locations.
- Upgradable transitional shelters for households unable to return quickly.

Shelter and Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM) Needs

- Emergency tents, tarpaulins, and temporary hut-type structures to reduce overcrowding in safety centres.
- Reinforced transitional shelters for high-risk districts (Kandy, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Kegalle, Matale).
- Safe water supplies, including bottled water and purification tablets where sources are contaminated.
- Expansion of safety centres with partitions, privacy materials, lighting, and improved ventilation.

- Strengthening of CCCM systems in overcrowded centres, including registration, space management, and protection mainstreaming.
- Temporary toilets and pit latrines, along with waste-segregation and waste-management facilities.
- Power supply solutions, including generators for critical sites.

Non-Food Item (NFI) Needs

- Sleeping materials: mats, mattresses, blankets, bed sheets, pillows and pillow cases
- WASH NFIs: buckets, jerry cans, hygiene kits, sanitary pads, soap
- Kitchen NFIs: cookery items, utensils, pots, pans, plates, cups, stoves, knives and spoons, coconut scraper
- Household items: mosquito nets, solar lamps/torches, clothing, brooms, ekel brooms, mops,
- Clothing items: For Women and Children/ Under Garments/ School uniforms/ towels, shoes, For Nuwara Eliya and Badulla: Heating-appropriate NFIs (blankets, warm clothing)
- Protection Items: Battery-driven light sources/torches

4.2 Health & Nutrition

- Restoring critical facility operations in flood-affected areas, including temporary power solutions, water-supply restoration, debris clearance, and rapid repair of damaged SRH/MCH units.
- Ensuring continuity of maternal, newborn, and reproductive health services, including emergency obstetric referral pathways, clean delivery support, and antenatal/postnatal care, safe spaces for counselling, and access to essential SRH commodities.
- Fully operationalizing the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) through coordinated health-sector action.
- Scaling up mobile and outreach health and nutrition services to reach isolated communities and overcrowded safety centres where routine care, including immunization, NCD management, menstrual health support, family planning access and child-health and nutrition services, has been disrupted.
- Strengthening communicable-disease prevention, including waterborne and respiratory infections, through the provision of safe drinking water, hygiene supplies, and infection-prevention materials, including in safer centres.
- Expanding Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services for affected communities, children, women,young people and first responders, including Psychological First Aid and referral for advanced care.
- Improving Infant and Young Child Feeding during Emergencies through protecting and supporting breastfeeding, and strengthening communication on appropriate feeding practices linked to service provision.
- Restoring essential nutrition services, including growth monitoring, screening for acute malnutrition, and provision of Thriposha or similar nutrition supplements, nutritional meals and supplements, and therapeutic feeding for children with severe malnutrition.
- Ensuring food and nutrition security through ready-to-eat rations, fortified foods (including staples), and nutrition supplements. Dry food rations are needed for households able to cook, especially where markets are not functioning and livelihoods have been affected.

- Ensuring access for persons with disabilities, including medicine continuation, mobility support, sexual and reproductive health, protection services and assisted referral for acute health needs.
- Ensuring routine health needs for older persons, including long-term care needs and continued access to medication and monitoring for non-communicable diseases.

4.3 Protection

- Conducting rapid GBV safety audits in evacuation centres to identify protection gaps and guide immediate risk-mitigation measures.
- Strengthening GBV referral pathways, ensuring coordination between health, justice, and social services, and non-state actors (CSOs and the Forum Against GBV), including integration with MHPSS services.
- Distributing menstrual, maternity, and other dignity-related essential items at district and divisional levels to ensure equitable access for women, girls, and vulnerable groups. The kits should include GBV helpline numbers and key referral information to facilitate safe access to services.
- Supporting GBV service providers through capacity strengthening and refurbishment of shelters, ensuring survivor-centred, confidential, and safe services.
- Establishing and maintaining Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) in evacuation centres to provide protection, psychosocial support, and access to services.
- Utilising Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) for protection and SRH needs, prioritising women at high risk, survivors, and vulnerable households.
- Identify and support older persons with cognitive or neurological conditions, such as dementia, who may face increased risks of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in displacement settings.

4.4 WASH

- Supply of safe drinking water, hygiene kits, and water-purification materials.
- Conduct water trucking and install water tanks at distribution points.
- Provide the bowser water supply to health-care facilities to maintain essential services.
- Restore community and rural water-supply schemes to re-establish safe and reliable water access.
- Improving menstrual health and hygiene by ensuring access to safe water, sanitation, and appropriate hygiene supplies for women and girls.
- Distribute hygiene kits, including menstrual hygiene supplies.
- Supporting dug-well cleaning through the provision of TCL for household-level disinfection.
- Strengthening water purification, including chlorine powder for rural water-supply schemes and chlorine tablets for household water treatment.
- Providing essential water-testing chemicals and equipment, water bowsers, generators, water tanks, water pumps, and portable water-purification machines.
- Ensuring disinfection of health-care facilities through the supply of Lysol and other approved disinfectants.

4.5 Education

- Preparing schools for safe reopening, including debris removal, structural safety assessments, water-tank purification, and urgent repairs.
- Providing cleaning products and basic tools to accelerate school readiness.
- Ensuring continuity of learning for students housed in safety shelters, including through digital learning support and learning materials, especially for those whose examinations have been postponed.
- Replacing damaged or lost teaching and learning supplies in affected schools.
- Providing individual learning materials for students whose homes and belongings were damaged or destroyed.
- Technical guidance and training to school leaders and teachers on strategies to recover learning losses during prolonged school closures.
- Address MHPSS needs of teachers and students through targeted psychosocial support interventions.
- For schools that have been severely damaged or destroyed, ensure ongoing support for temporary learning spaces, including supplies, teacher training, and technical guidance.
- Plan and implement the reconstruction of schools that cannot be safely repaired.

4.6 Food Security and Agriculture, Livestock, Fishery

Household Food Security

- Locally sourced food should be prioritized where markets are functioning. However, as local stocks become depleted and markets remain inaccessible, ready to eat rations, fortified staples, supplementary nutrition foods, and targeted support for infants, young children, and pregnant women are urgently required to meet basic dietary needs.
- Dry food rations are also essential for households with the ability to cook at home, particularly in areas where local markets are not functioning, and livelihoods have been disrupted.
- Rapid cash transfers can enable households to meet diverse requirements where markets continue to operate, reducing dependency on in-kind aid.
- Safe drinking water and hygiene kits are vital to prevent disease outbreaks that could compromise food utilization.
- Temporary shelters and the restoration of supply routes are also necessary to stabilize access to food and essential services during this acute phase of the crisis.
- In the mid-term, as communities begin to rebuild, assistance for replanting crops, livestock farming, restoring fisheries, and rehabilitating small businesses will be necessary to restore income streams and strengthen household resilience.
- Market revitalization through cash-for-work programs to repair roads, irrigation systems, and other critical infrastructure will help restore connectivity and stimulate local economies.
- Nutrition services must be scaled up, with targeted interventions for vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, schoolchildren (through strengthening the national school meal programme), the elderly, and persons with disabilities. These measures are essential to prevent malnutrition and ensure that recovery efforts are inclusive and equitable.

- It is critical to assess and strengthen existing social protection programmes to safeguard food and nutrition security. This includes reviewing current coverage and effectiveness, identifying gaps in reaching vulnerable groups such as under-five children, pregnant and lactating women, and low-income households, and ensuring that cash transfers, food rations, and supplementary nutrition schemes are adequately funded and efficiently delivered.
- Close monitoring systems for food security among affected populations are essential to design appropriate assistance profiles. Recovery phases are longer for vulnerable groups, and their path to stability will require extended support.
- Expand adaptive social safety nets to provide scalable cash and food support during crises, ensuring households are better protected against economic and environmental disruptions.

Agriculture

- Supply seed paddy, vegetable seeds, and OFC seeds to enable rapid replanting and recovery of the Maha season cropping cycle.
- Provide essential agricultural inputs, including fertilizers, tools, small machinery, and basic implements, to support farmers in restarting cultivation.
- Implement cash-for-work programmes to clear debris, repair field bunds, and restore minor canals, drainage systems, and other critical agricultural infrastructure.
- Deliver targeted extension services, including crop health assessments, guidance on recovery practices, and advice on appropriate management following inundation.
- Support recovery across agriculture, livestock, and fisheries to rebuild income sources and restore household resilience.
- Coordinate with health authorities to mitigate waterborne disease risks in flooded agricultural areas and ensure safe re-entry into fields.
- Scale up nutrition services for vulnerable groups—children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older persons, and persons with disabilities—to prevent acute malnutrition.

Livestocks

- Provide emergency veterinary services, including treatment for injured animals and disease prevention.
- Provision of animal feed and clean water for affected livestock.
- Repair or replace damaged shelters and grazing areas to restore safe housing and feeding conditions.
- Support restocking of lost animals for the most affected.
- Link farmers to cash assistance and social protection programmes to restore livelihoods and prevent further economic losses.

Fisheries

- Rehabilitation of fishing assets and infrastructure, including replacement or repair of vessels, engines, nets, fish cages, and essential fisheries facilities such as community centres, markets, and navigational systems.
- Support to restart aquaculture and hatchery operations, through the provision of fish feed, broodstock, fingerlings, and inputs for both food fish and ornamental fish

producers, alongside the introduction of resilient technologies such as RAS and lined ponds.
- Strengthening cold chain and value chain continuity, including rapid assessments and the repair or replacement of ice plants, freezers, cold rooms, and promoting energy-efficient, disaster-resilient cold chain systems.
- Access to financial and institutional support, including low-interest recovery loans and exploration of initiatives such as the establishment of a boat bank for use in emergency settings.

5. Community-Reported Needs

As of the morning of 30 November 2025, the national 117 call centre hotline has registered a total of 13,141 requests for assistance from individuals affected by floods and landslides. These requests originate from 10 districts across the country namely Puttalam Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Colombo, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Gampaha, Matale, Badulla and Kegalle

Cooked food and safe water are the most urgent needs across all 10 affected districts, while dry rations are critical in six districts, including Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Matale, and Badulla. Medicine is required in four districts, and clothing in three, with Nuwara Eliya, Kurunegala, Matale, and Badulla reporting the broadest range of needs. These districts are also among the hardest hit by landslides, underscoring the severity of the situation and the need for a comprehensive humanitarian response.

6. Way Forward

The Rapid Needs Assessment has provided an initial overview of the immediate impacts of the disaster; however, several limitations remain in terms of data availability, geographic coverage, and granularity. Moving forward, it is essential to address these gaps through a more systematic and comprehensive approach to strengthen decision-making and guide targeted recovery efforts.

First, the current assessment was constrained by limited and fragmented data, with some information based on rapid field observations and secondary sources. Due to significant sector-specific data gaps, it is essential to conduct a multisectoral joint rapid needs assessment, including field-level verification. This process will validate Phase 1 information, address existing gaps, and enable a deeper analysis of priority needs.

Second, deeper analysis is required to understand the full extent of impacts across sectors such as housing, livelihoods, WASH, health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture. This requires adopting a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative data such as household counts, infrastructure losses, and demographic profiles with qualitative insights from key informants, community leaders, women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Such triangulation will help capture both numerical trends and the lived realities of affected communities.

Third, field-based data collection is expected to be conducted to complement initial findings. Detailed assessments at GN and DS levels will enable the development of a comprehensive,

evidence-based report that can directly inform recovery planning, resource prioritization, and targeted interventions.

Finally, improving data systems, enhancing assessment tools, and building local capacity for emergency information management will ensure that Phase 2 rapid assessment is faster, more accurate, and more responsive to the needs of crisis-affected populations.

7.Data Sources used

1. Satellite imagery data

   1.1 Sentinel-2 (Copernicus): High-resolution imagery for flood extent mapping and cropland analysis

   1.2 Landsat series (NASA/USGS): Historical and current land cover data.

   1.3 International Water Management Institute

   1.4 Spacety China (Chaohu-1 Satellite, Sehnqi-02 Satellite: Image processing by Dr. Lei Shi and Dr. Lingli Zhao from Wuhan University with the support of the China Regional Support Office of UN-SPIDER

   1.5 UNOSAT analysis

2. Department of Census and Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2024 - https://www.statistics.gov.lk/Population/StaticalInformation/CPH2024
3. Department of Census and Statistics, Women's Wellbeing Survey, 2019 - https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/womens_wellbeing_survey.pdf
4. Hectorkobabkaduwa Research Institute, Daily Price Bulletin
5. World Food Programme, Household Food Security Survey results, 2024 https://www.wfp.org/publications/household-food-security-surveys-sri-lanka
6. National Building Research Institute (NBRI)
7. National Disaster Relief Services Centre, Housing damage information, Safety Centers

For more information

Disaster Management Centre

Contributors