

**[Form letter asking for donations (EPH464:157, EPH464:158) to help work in disaster relief in China, Myanmar and Bangladesh from Sir Nicholas Young, the Chief Executive of the British Red Cross Society].**

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

same strength killed 140,000 people. Our work in Bangladesh is as crucial as ever, and we have already done so much – with your support, we can do even more to help vulnerable communities prepare themselves for the natural disasters we know will keep coming their way.

**The Red Cross works in local communities all over the world, responding to crises at a moment's notice and helping people carry on with their daily lives long after a crisis.**

You may remember the major earthquake which devastated China in May – the worst to hit the country in 30 years, killing over 79,000 people, and leaving a further five million without shelter to protect them from the elements. Survivors were in desperate need of food, water, shelter and medical equipment, and the Red Cross was immediately on hand to provide emergency relief including food, water, tents and blankets.

As I write, the focus in China has turned to safeguarding the health of earthquake survivors, and a British Red Cross team that specialises in preventing the outbreak of disease is providing help in the worst affected area. Our mass sanitation unit will have a huge impact on the lives of thousands of people living in the aftermath of the quake.

**I have written a great deal about our response to headline-hitting emergencies. But the Red Cross is also there in the aftermath of disasters once the media spotlight has moved on.**

You may also remember Cyclone Nargis, which ripped through Myanmar in May, killing over 78,000 people. In some areas 95 per cent of homes were completely destroyed and 2.4 million people were directly affected and in urgent need of aid. The staff and 17,000 volunteers of the Myanmar Red Cross have been there since day one, helping those whose lives have been shattered.

It was agonising to see the world's media focusing on aid not getting in – because although this operation has undoubtedly been extremely difficult, I'd like to reassure you that Red Cross aid has been reaching those in desperate need of shelter, clean water and medical aid.

**I am confident that if you were affected by a disaster on this scale, you would not hesitate to show your compassion by making a donation to our life-saving work.**

As well as reacting rapidly when disaster strikes abroad, the Red Cross is always ready to respond to emergencies in the UK. I'm sure you will remember the floods that wreaked havoc across the country last summer, destroying homes and livelihoods, and bringing misery to hundreds of thousands of people. British Red Cross volunteers were immediately on hand to help evacuate residents and staff rest centres, as well as to distribute emergency provisions in affected areas. This is why it was especially heartwarming for me to see the dedicated staff and volunteers recently praised by the Floods Recovery Minister for their efforts in responding to last summer's floods.

The British Red Cross has also been helping people get back on their feet and rebuild their lives after the floods. Lynne Bratley and her family lost everything – pots, pans, furniture and even food – when the murky brown floodwater seeped into her house, several feet deep and still rising.

With help from the British Red Cross and another local charity, Lynne was able to pay for the gas and coal to heat the caravan her family had to move into. They were also able to replace the essential items many of us are lucky enough to take for granted – like food, clothes, a washer and a dryer. Lynne is so grateful for the help she received from Red Cross supporters: "Without them I really don't

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know what we would've done. When we do get straight, I'll be giving money back to help others."

**Without the Red Cross, many more people like Lynne and her family would find it impossible to cope. But with your help we can offer a lifeline to others in equally distressing situations.**

I have written a great deal about our response to headline-hitting disasters. But people don't have to be caught up in a cyclone or affected by floods to be vulnerable. Many people, right here in the UK, face personal crises in their own homes – people like 85-year-old Irene, from Nottingham.

When Irene was discharged from hospital, three days after a major operation, she was referred to the British Red Cross home from hospital service. Over the next five days, our volunteer called repeatedly, but Irene – who is deaf – couldn't hear the doorbell. Eventually the volunteer got in and found Irene, weak and disorientated, surviving only on digestive biscuits.

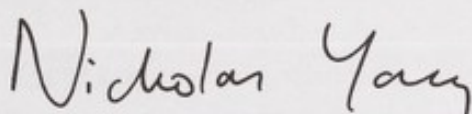
Our volunteer did what the Red Cross does best. She offered immediate practical help – in this case, doing the shopping, cleaning the house and organising visits from social services. At the same time, she gave another priceless gift – warmth and compassion – as she chatted to Irene and lifted her spirits.

**Without the British Red Cross, people like Irene could remain trapped and isolated in their homes. With your help, we can offer a lifeline to vulnerable people who have nowhere else to turn.**

Stories like this and the people I meet remind me that suffering is not about statistics. We must never overlook the personal anguish of people caught up in situations beyond their control.

**Here at the British Red Cross we must continue to do everything we can to save lives, relieve suffering and help people to recover from disasters. Sadly, there will always be more emergencies and we simply have to be ready. We can only do this with your support. Your gift today could save lives. Thank you.**

With heartfelt thanks,



Sir Nicholas Young  
Chief executive

**P.S. I would not be writing to you today if the need were not so great and if I wasn't so sure that you would show your compassion. We need your support more than ever before. So please, make a donation today.**

If you are already helping the British Red Cross, please accept our thanks. You may like to pass this letter on to someone else you know.