



Government Legal and Administrative Measures Following Cyclone Ditwah.

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Cyclone Ditwah made landfall in Sri Lanka on **28 November 2025**, unleashing unprecedented rainfall, widespread flooding, and deadly landslides that systematically overwhelmed the island's infrastructure and disaster-response capacity. The tropical cyclone's passage triggered severe flooding across all 25 administrative districts and destabilised slopes in the central highlands, resulting in hundreds of confirmed deaths and missing persons, and millions of people affected through loss of homes, livelihoods, and essential services such as water, power, transport, and healthcare¹. The scope of displacement and destruction has been described as one of the worst natural disasters in Sri Lanka's recent history², with millions of people impacted and significant economic losses amounting to billions of U.S. dollars³.

In response, the Government of Sri Lanka enacted a series of legal and administrative measures under existing laws to facilitate disaster relief, recovery, maintenance of essential services, and public order.

1. Existing Statutory Disaster Management Framework Versus Post-Ditwah Emergency Framework

Aspect	Pre-Ditwah	Post-Ditwah
Primary Legislation	Disaster Management Act (DMA) No. 13 of 2005⁴ : nationwide disaster law providing a framework for planning, coordination, response, and recovery	Public Security Ordinance⁵ (PSO) (Chapter 40), Part II : empowers the President to make emergency regulations when Part II is brought into operation (Secs. 2, 5–11). Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations No. 1 of 2025⁶ : issued under PSO Sec. 5 in Gazette Extraordinary No. 2464/31 (28 Nov 2025) ⁷ .
Scope and Purpose	Covers all calamities and hazards defined in the Act; directs coordination across preparedness, mitigation, response, relief,	Regulations apply during an emergency declared under PSO Sec. 2 and grant exceptional powers deemed necessary for public security, preservation of public

¹ <https://srilankabrief.org/sri-lanka-brief-update-cyclone-ditwah-key-facts-and-lessons-learned/>

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166474>

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/12/22/damage-from-cyclone-ditwah-in-sri-lanka-estimated-at-4-1-billion>

⁴ https://www.dmc.gov.lk/images/DM_Act_English.pdf

⁵ https://www.lawnet.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/leg_enact_1981/1981Y3V51C.html

⁶ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-31_E.pdf

⁷ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-31_E.pdf

	rehabilitation, and reconstruction (Secs. 4-10).	order, and maintenance of essential services.
Declaration Mechanism	State of Disaster: President may declare when disaster severity exceeds normal capacity (Sec. 11(1)). Proclamations must be laid before Parliament and lapse after two months unless extended by resolution (Sec. 11(2)–(4)).	Public Emergency: President may declare via Gazette under PSO Sec. 2. The proclamation brings Part II of PSO and emergency regulations into force. The Gazette No. 2464/30 (28 Nov 2025) ⁸ declared Part II in operation nationwide.
Governing Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM), established by Sec. 2 and chaired by the President, is for policy oversight. • Disaster Management Centre (DMC) established by Sec. 8, is responsible for implementing national plans and coordinating ministries and agencies. • Technical Advisory Committees may be appointed under Sec. 9 to assist the Council and DMC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent Authorities: appointed by President under Reg. 5 of the Emergency Regulations to exercise powers conferred by the Regulations. • Commissioner-General of Essential Services: appointed by President under Reg. 11(1) to coordinate essential services and direct authorities (Gazette 2464/32, 29 Nov 2025)⁹. <i>Existing bodies such as NCDM/DMC operate only where consistent with emergency directions.</i>
Operational Powers	DMA empowers DMC to implement national plans and coordinate disaster response (Sec. 8(2)(b)). <i>Ministries and corporations must prepare plans and act upon declaration, but the Act does not authorise direct exercise of coercive powers such as compulsory service, requisition of property, or binding orders with enforcement by force.</i>	Emergency Regulations provide coercive operational powers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reg. 8(1): Requisition of premises for disaster relief; armed forces officers authorised to take possession. • Reg. 9: Competent authority may requisition vehicles for national security or essential services. • Reg. 10: President may require persons to do work or render personal service in aid of national security or essential services; non-compliance is an offence. • Reg. 12: President may declare any service to be an essential

⁸ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-30_E.pdf

⁹ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-32_E.pdf

		service, allowing requisition of personnel engaged in it. • Reg. 48: President may appoint Coordinating Officers and Coordinators-in-Chief capable of exercising powers normally vested in district secretaries under ordinary law.
Enforcement and Offences	Sec. 24: Offences and penalties for failure to comply with the Act or regulations (e.g., offences against statutory duties) are enforced through ordinary legal procedures; penalties limited to fines or other sanctions under the Act.	Emergency Regulations include specific offences and sanctions: • Reg. 16: Search and arrest powers without warrant for offences under specified Penal Code sections. • Reg. 24–28: Offences for resisting or obstructing authorities or damaging infrastructure. • Reg. 29: Penalties for contravention of emergency directions (imprisonment and fines as prescribed).
Legal Protections	Sec. 23 protects officials acting in good faith under the Act.	Reg. 49: No civil or criminal proceeding may be instituted for acts in good faith under the emergency Regulations, except with Presidential consent.
Temporal Scope and Duration	DMA is a permanent statutory regime; special provisions (state of disaster) are subject to parliamentary oversight and fixed durations (two-month periods extendable by Parliament).	PSO emergency regime is temporary ; emergency Regulations take effect upon Presidential proclamation of a Public Emergency and cease when the proclamation ends. PSO Sec. 2(2) provides for Part II to operate for up to one month, extendable by further proclamations.

2. Extraordinary Gazettes Issued

- **Gazette No. 2464/30¹⁰, 28 November 2025:** The President issued a proclamation under Section 2 of the *Public Security Ordinance (PSO)* bringing Part II into operation throughout Sri Lanka with effect from 28 November 2025 on the basis that a public emergency exists which affects security, public order, and the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community.

¹⁰https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-30_E.pdf

- **Gazette No. 2464/31¹¹, 28 November 2025:** The President promulgated the *Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations, No. 1 of 2025* under the PSO, granting temporary powers to the President, authorised Ministers, the Commissioner-General of Essential Services, and other designated officers to issue binding directions to public bodies and service providers, require cooperation and information, control the distribution of essential goods such as fuel, food, electricity, and water, and take necessary measures to prevent disruption of essential services during the emergency period.
- **Gazette No. 2464/29¹², 28 November 2025:** The President issued an order under the *Essential Public Services Act, No. 61 of 1979*, declaring electricity supply, fuel and gas supply, hospital and health-care services, public passenger and goods transport, road, rail, air transport and tourism infrastructure, water and drainage services, supply and distribution of food and essential commodities, key field officers (Divisional Secretariats, Grama Niladhari, Samurdhi, agriculture and community officers), ambulance services, state banking and insurance services including the Central Bank, local authority services for water, electricity, drainage, sewerage, garbage collection, fire and ambulance, irrigation services, telecommunications and media services, reclamation and development of low-lying lands, and agricultural services and agricultural insurance as **essential public services** during severe adverse weather caused by Cyclone Ditwah, making any interruption of these services an offence under the Act.
- **Gazette No. 2464/32¹³, 29 November 2025:** The President appointed Mr. B.K. Prabath Chandrakeerthi, a Special Grade Sri Lanka Administrative Service officer, as **Commissioner-General of Essential Services** under the Emergency Regulations, authorising him to coordinate and carry out all activities relating to the supply, continuity, and maintenance of essential services nationwide.
- **Gazette No. 2465/08¹⁴, 2 December 2025:** The Registrar General declared **22 administrative districts**, including Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Kurunegala, Matale, Kegalle, Gampaha, Colombo, Mullaitivu, Jaffna, Polonnaruwa, Mannar, Puttalam, Ratnapura, Monaragala, Batticaloa, Ampara, Trincomalee, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, and Kalutara, as **National Disaster Affected Areas** under the *Registration of Deaths (Temporary Provisions) Act, No. 19 of 2010* due to landslides and floods caused by Cyclone Ditwah, facilitating expedited death registration, administrative documentation, and delivery of relief in affected areas.
- **Gazette No. 2465/16¹⁵, 4 December 2025:** The Ministry of Finance issued an order under the *Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007*, **waiving the**

¹¹ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-31_E.pdf

¹² https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-29_E.pdf

¹³ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-32_E.pdf

¹⁴ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2465-08_E.pdf

¹⁵ https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2465-16_E.pdf

Special Commodity Levy for the importation of essential goods received as aid or donations for the “Disaster Recovery Project” to assist people affected by Cyclone Ditwah, provided the goods are consigned to the Secretary of the Ministry of Defence or the Director General of the Disaster Management Centre, approved by the Director General of Customs, remain accountable until delivered for their intended purpose, and are not sold, transferred, or disposed of without Treasury approval; the waiver is valid for one year from 5 December 2025.

- **Gazette No. 2467/51¹⁶, 17 December 2025:** Parliament formally approved the Presidential Proclamation bringing Part II of the *Public Security Ordinance* into operation on 5 December 2025, thereby providing constitutional and parliamentary validation for the emergency powers exercised by the government since 28 November 2025.
- **Gazette No. 2468/30¹⁷, 26 December 2025:** The President authorised the calling out of the Sri Lanka Army, Navy, and Air Force under Section 12 of the *Public Security Ordinance*, effective from 27 December 2025, to assist civil authorities in maintaining public order across multiple administrative districts, including Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Jaffna, Galle, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and others, as well as adjacent territorial waters, during the ongoing emergency.
- **Gazette No. 2468/45¹⁸, 28 December 2025:** The President declared a nationwide public emergency under Section 2 of the *Public Security Ordinance*, bringing Part II of the Ordinance into operation throughout Sri Lanka, to ensure the continuation of emergency powers and public order measures during the prevailing adverse weather and disaster conditions.
- **Gazette No. 2468/46¹⁹, 28 December 2025:** The President re-declared electricity, fuel, water, healthcare, public transport, highways, ports, food supply, banking and insurance, telecommunications, agriculture, irrigation, local authority services, and emergency services as **essential public services** under the *Essential Public Services Act, No. 61 of 1979*, to legally reinforce uninterrupted delivery of critical services during the ongoing disaster recovery period.
- **Gazette No. 2469/09²⁰, 31 December 2025:** The President established the **Presidential Task Force for Rebuilding Sri Lanka** under *Article 33 of the Constitution*, assigning it to provide strategic leadership, coordinate nationwide post-disaster rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction, oversee restoration of basic services, infrastructure, housing, livelihoods, and local economies, manage funding including the Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund, establish data and

¹⁶https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2467-51_E.pdf

¹⁷https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2468-30_E.pdf

¹⁸https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2468-45_E.pdf

¹⁹https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2468-46_E.pdf

²⁰https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2469-09_E.pdf

decision-support systems, appoint sectoral sub-committees, and report progress periodically to the President.

3. Cabinet Decisions

- **01 December 2025²¹ – Establishment of “Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund” (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved the establishment of a dedicated Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund to finance rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction following Cyclone Ditwah. The Fund is constituted as a statutory fund under the Presidential Secretariat and is authorised to receive local and foreign donor contributions into a separate designated account. Initial capital has been provided from General Treasury funds already transferred to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The Fund is mandated to support restoration of housing, public infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, livelihoods, and essential services in disaster-affected areas.
- **01 December 2025²² – Immediate Relief for People Affected by Emergency Calamity (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved immediate emergency assistance measures for citizens affected by extreme weather arising from Cyclone Ditwah, recognising the disaster period as commencing from 21 November 2025. Additional budgetary provisions amounting to Rs. 550 million were approved for relief operations. Weekly dry-ration assistance per family was increased from the previous range of Rs. 1,800–3,600 to Rs. 2,100–10,500 depending on household size. The Secretary to the Treasury was empowered to issue approvals and operational guidance, and the measures cover emergency relief, temporary assistance, and early normalisation of living conditions in affected communities.
- **10 December 2025²³ – Consolidation and Implementation of MSME Disaster Relief Loans (RE-MSME PLUS) (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved implementation of the RE-MSME PLUS loan scheme to support post-disaster **recovery of micro, small, and medium enterprises**. The scheme consolidates previous loan programmes, including SMILE-III, E-FRIEND-II, and RE-MSME, and is expected to benefit approximately 130,000 entrepreneurs. Loans are provided with a three-year repayment period, an annual interest rate of 3 per cent, and a six-month grace period. Maximum loan limits are Rs. 250,000 for micro enterprises and Rs. 1,000,000 for small and medium enterprises, to provide immediate working capital for business recovery.
- **10 December 2025²⁴ – Cleaning and Support for Religious Venues Affected by Calamity (Ministry of Buddha Shasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs):** Cabinet approved provision of financial assistance to restore religious places affected by Cyclone Ditwah. Each affected religious site is entitled to Rs. 25,000 to meet cleaning costs and enable resumption of religious activities.

²¹https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/Cabinet_Decisions_on_01.12.2025_E.pdf

²²https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/Cabinet_Decisions_on_01.12.2025_E.pdf

²³https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/11/Cabinet_Decision_on_10.12.2025_English.pdf

²⁴https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/11/Cabinet_Decision_on_10.12.2025_English.pdf

Budgetary provisions were allocated to the Ministry to implement this measure, which aims to support community normalisation and continuity of religious observances.

- **10 December 2025²⁵ – Activation of Emergency Response Components Using World Bank-Funded Projects (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved utilisation of existing World Bank-financed projects to support post-flood and landslide recovery associated with Cyclone Ditwah. The financing envelope is estimated at USD 92–112 million. The funds are to be used for accelerated rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged roads, bridges, public buildings, and other critical infrastructure, particularly in disaster-prone and heavily affected areas.
- **10 December 2025²⁶ – Grant from Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved acceptance of a USD 3 million grant from the Asian Development Bank’s Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund. The grant will finance emergency relief operations and support maintenance of essential services for Cyclone Ditwah-affected communities. Authority was granted to finalise and sign the necessary agreements with the Asian Development Bank.
- **29 December 2025²⁷ – Comprehensive Disaster Relief Loan Scheme (Expanded Coverage) (Ministry of Finance, Policy Planning and Economic Development):** Cabinet approved extension of the existing RE-MSME disaster relief loan scheme to include all entrepreneurs affected by calamities, including medium- and large-scale enterprises. Loans will be provided at an annual interest rate of 3 per cent, with a three-year repayment period and a six-month grace period. Maximum loan amounts are Rs. 250,000 for micro enterprises, Rs. 1 million for small enterprises, and Rs. 25 million for medium and large enterprises. A total allocation of Rs. 5 billion was approved for implementation.

4. Presidential Task Force for Rebuilding Sri Lanka

By **Gazette Extraordinary No. 2469/09 dated 31 December 2025²⁸**, issued under *Article 33 of the Constitution*, the President of Sri Lanka formally established the **Presidential Task Force for Rebuilding Sri Lanka** in response to the widespread devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah, which resulted in loss of life, injuries, and extensive damage to public and private property across the country.

The Task Force is mandated to provide strategic leadership, national coordination, a unified approach, and overall oversight of all post-disaster rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction initiatives carried out under the “Rebuilding Sri Lanka” framework.

Composition

²⁵https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/11/Cabinet_Decision_on_10.12.2025_English.pdf

²⁶https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/11/Cabinet_Decision_on_10.12.2025_English.pdf

²⁷https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/30/Cabinet_Decisions_on_29.12.2025_E.pdf

²⁸https://www.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/31/2469-09_E.pdf

The Task Force comprises Cabinet Ministers, senior provincial leadership, key ministry secretaries, and senior presidential advisors, including:

- Prime Minister (Chairperson)
- Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs; Public Administration and Local Government; Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation; Rural Development and Social Security; Industry and Entrepreneurship; Transport, Highways and Urban Development; Health and Mass Media; Labour and Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning; Environment; Housing, Construction and Water Supply
- Governor of the Western Province
- Deputy Minister of Defence
- Secretary to the President
- Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
- Secretary, Ministry of Defence
- Commissioner-General of Essential Services
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Director General of Government Information
- Additional named professionals and legal experts

The Convener/Secretary to the Task Force is appointed as **G. M. R. D. Aponsu**.

Core Functions of the Task Force

The Task Force is assigned the responsibility to:

- Provide overall policy direction and take strategic decisions for national rebuilding.
- Resolve cross-ministerial coordination issues.
- Guide major funding, recovery, and reconstruction choices.
- Oversee implementation of national recovery and reconstruction programs.

These functions specifically cover:

- Reinstatement of basic needs, sanitation, and healthcare.
- Rebuilding of basic infrastructure.
- Scaling up livelihoods and productive assets.
- Restoration of local economies.
- Establishment of digital data systems and decision-support mechanisms.
- Improvement of communication and stakeholder engagement.

Powers and Reporting

Members of the Task Force are authorized to:

- Make inquiries and issue instructions necessary to carry out assigned tasks.
- Obtain assistance from public officers and institutions.
- Submit periodic progress reports to the President on execution of assigned responsibilities.

Authority to Establish Sub-Committees

The Task Force is empowered to establish sector-specific **Sub-Committees**, chaired by relevant Sector Ministers, to operationalize decisions and monitor implementation.

The Gazette identifies the following Sub-Committees as necessary:

- **Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Committee**
Responsible for collecting, analysing, and evaluating data on physical damage, economic losses, and social impacts.
- **Restoration of Public Infrastructure Committee**

Oversees rehabilitation and reconstruction of transport, electricity, water, irrigation, health, education, and telecommunications systems, ensuring technical standards and disaster-resilient construction.

- **Restoration of Housing for Affected Communities Committee**
Supports rebuilding or constructing housing in safe zones and serviced areas, based on a housing recovery plan and mobilized technical and financial resources.
- **Revival of Local Economies and Livelihoods Committee**
Guides stabilization of livelihoods, restoration of supply chains, improvement of access to finance, and development of economic recovery strategies.
- **Restoration of Social Infrastructure Committee**
Coordinates restoration of education, health, water, sanitation, and welfare services, while monitoring disease prevention and relief camp conditions.
- **Finance and Funding Committee**
Formalizes the Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund Governing Committee as a statutory fund and formulates criteria for fundraising, budgeting, donor coordination, fund allocation, and transparent financial management within the national fiscal framework.
- **Data and Information Systems Committee**
Establishes data platforms and analytical systems to identify priorities, guide recovery planning, monitor implementation, and support evidence-based decision-making.
- **Public Communication Committee**
Develops and implements a coordinated public communication and stakeholder engagement strategy.

On **13 January 2026**, under the patronage of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the **national programme “Rebuilding Sri Lanka”** was officially launched in Colombo at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall to coordinate the nation’s reconstruction efforts following the extensive damage from Cyclone Ditwah. The launch marked the operational beginning of the Task Force’s oversight role and included a multi-pronged financing strategy involving re-purposing existing development projects, re-allocating additional budgetary resources under a **Rs. 500 billion supplementary estimate for 2026**, and mobilising domestic, foreign, public, and private donor support through the *Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund*.²⁹

To support reconstruction financing, a **statutory Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund** was created under the Presidential Secretariat, and a **Management Committee** comprising public and private sector representatives was appointed by Cabinet approval on **1 December 2025**³⁰ to administer the Fund, assess requirements, set priorities, allocate resources, oversee disbursements for recovery activities, and ensure transparent financial operations, including auditing. Members include **Dr. Anil Jayantha Fernando** (Chairman), **G. M. R. D. Aponso** (Convener), **Hanif Yusoof**, **Dr. Harshana Suriyapperuma**, **Duminda Hulangamuwa**, **Sugeeshwara Gunaratne**,

²⁹<https://www.presidentsoffice.gov.lk/rebuilding-sri-lanka-national-initiative-launched-under-the-patronage-of-the-president>

³⁰https://www.dqi.gov.lk/images/2025/12/Cabinet_Decisions_on_01.12.2025_E.pdf

Mohan Pandithage, Krishan Balendra, Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake, Ashroff Omar, and Ishara Nanayakkara among others.³¹

To facilitate public participation, donor engagement, and transparency, the Government **launched the official Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund monitoring website (www.rebuildingsrilanka.gov.lk)**. This platform allows local and international donors to make **financial contributions**, donate **materials, land, and other resources**, and monitor information related to their contributions, project progress, district-wise reconstruction activities, official announcements, and Fund use.³²

As part of the Task Force's operational programmes, the government commenced the **"PROJECT 5M" housing compensation and construction initiative on 9 January 2026** under the Rebuilding Sri Lanka umbrella to support families whose homes were destroyed by Cyclone Ditwah. The event was held in the Anuradhapura District and included compensation for fully destroyed houses and the ceremonial commencement of new construction, with the government estimating that between **20,000 and 25,000 new homes** will be needed in addition to the nearly **31,000 houses** already planned in the 2026 national housing programme.³³

As of 26 January 2026, the **Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund** has raised a total of **LKR 5,942,467,000** and **USD 9,982,703**.³⁴

5. Office of the Commissioner-General of Essential Services

In the immediate aftermath of **Cyclone Ditwah** in late **November 2025**, the Government of Sri Lanka established the **Office of the Commissioner-General of Essential Services**³⁵ to coordinate national recovery efforts and ensure continuity of life-sustaining services under emergency conditions. This office was instituted by the President as a **central operations hub within the Prime Minister's Office** to coordinate critical service restoration and multi-agency disaster response across affected areas.

The Commissioner-General, **B.K. Prabath Chandrakeerthi**³⁶ assumed responsibility for coordinating efforts across key sectors and government institutions, including the Ministry of Transport, Highways and Urban Development; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation; Ministry of Housing, Construction and Water Supply; and associated agencies such as Sri Lanka Railways, the Road Development Authority, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Ceylon Electricity Board, and Department of Irrigation, supported by tri-forces representation.

³¹<https://www.news.lk/news/management-committee-of-the-rebuilding-sri-lanka-fund-appointed-with-representatives-from-the-public-and-private-sectors>

³²<https://www.presidentsoffice.gov.lk/online-portal-launched-to-provide-information-on-the-rebuilding-sri-lanka-national-programme>

³³<https://rebuildingsrilanka.gov.lk/article.php>

³⁴<https://rebuildingsrilanka.gov.lk/>

³⁵https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-31_E.pdf

³⁶https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-32_E.pdf

By directive **CGES/2025/10 dated 8 December 2025**³⁷, the CGES instructed all District Secretaries to strengthen coordination with development partners, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations providing assistance to Cyclone Ditwah–affected communities. The directive records disparities in the geographic distribution of assistance and requires coordination to be based on verified needs and ground-level assessments. District Secretaries are required to work with partners to identify district-level priorities, prevent duplication of interventions, and facilitate high-impact activities, in accordance with established legal and institutional mechanisms. The directive further affirms that partner engagement is required throughout the relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and recovery phases, and that reviews of coordination arrangements and operational bottlenecks will be conducted through the Office of the CGES, in collaboration with the Prime Minister’s Office and relevant government agencies.

- **30 November 2025 – Restoration of Public Utility Services (Press Release)**³⁸

The CGES directed Provincial Chief Secretaries to assess infrastructure damage, identify shortages of food and essential services, take immediate remedial action, and report progress. Authority was granted to transfer equipment and personnel between Local Government Institutions across provinces. District Secretaries were instructed to resolve delivery bottlenecks and submit action plans. To address supply-chain disruptions, a vessel carrying 3,955 metric tons of LP gas was authorised to unload at Hambantota Port, and the Puttalam District Secretary was permitted to open the Lanka Sathosa warehouse in Chilaw to distribute food stocks.

- **01 December 2025 – Prevention of Price Exploitation (Press Release, File No. 2025/02)**³⁹

The CGES warned that certain traders were attempting to sell consumer goods at exorbitant prices by exploiting disaster-related shortages. Such practices were declared illegal under the Essential Services and Consumer Protection laws. Notice was given that legal action would be taken against individuals or businesses engaging in unfair pricing, hoarding, concealment of goods, or other malicious trading practices. Traders were instructed to maintain a continuous supply, sell goods at the Maximum Retail Price (where marked), and ensure reasonable pricing for all other items.

- **01 December 2025 – Disaster Relief and Restoration Measures (Press Release, File No. 2025/03)**⁴⁰

The CGES announced that the Registrar General would gazette affected areas as “National Disaster Areas” under Section 9 of the Registration of Deaths (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 19 of 2010, enabling registration of disaster-related deaths and missing persons. Authority to register such deaths was vested in District and Divisional Secretaries. It was reported that 108 RDA roads

³⁷<https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/ngo-coordination-1.pdf>

³⁸<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-01-E.pdf>

³⁹<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-02-E.pdf>

⁴⁰<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-03-E.pdf>

required restoration, and discussions were held with Litro Gas to ensure an uninterrupted supply. District Secretaries were instructed to publish lists of essential goods in shortage and to forward medium-term needs to the Prime Minister's Office for donor coordination. Overseas donations were to be received under the Disaster Management Centre for customs and tax concessions. The Government also decided to import frozen vegetables that meet Department of Agriculture standards.

- **02 December 2025 – Utilities, Roads, Water and Communications Update (Press Release, File No. 2025/04)**⁴¹

Litro Gas confirmed uninterrupted national supply and increased daily distribution from 75,000 to 91,000 cylinders, although delays remained in some areas due to blocked roads. Five water supply schemes in Badulla and Kandy were taken up for restoration. Of 2.95 million domestic water connections nationwide, about 388,000 remained disrupted. Approximately 20 per cent of telephone services were affected, with restoration linked to the electricity supply. By this date, 231 of 256 restricted roads had been reopened. Sri Lanka Air Force assets were deployed to deliver food and water to inaccessible areas.

- **03 December 2025 – Donor Coordination and Data Systems (Press Release, File No. 2025/05)**⁴²

The CGES informed donors that the District and Divisional Secretariats had updated their data systems with accurate information on affected persons and their specific needs. Donors were requested to coordinate assistance through these Secretariats so that support is targeted, balanced, and systematic, ensuring no individual or area is overlooked.

- **03 December 2025 – Cyclone Ditwah Impact Assessment and Recovery Measures (Press Release, File No. 2025/06)**⁴³

Patients who missed scheduled clinic visits, treatments, or medical examinations were instructed to be given new dates after the disaster period, with priority treatment. Significant damage was reported to agriculture, irrigation, roads, bridges, railways, power, and telecommunications. Only 478 km of the 1,593 km railway network remained operational. About 91 per cent of damaged telephone connections and 72 per cent of affected electricity consumers had been restored. The National Building Research Institute conducted structural assessments, and the Department of National Planning was instructed to prepare a Climate Responsive Recovery and Reconstruction Investment Plan.

- **06 December 2025 – National Essential Services Hotline (Press Release, File No. 2025/02)**⁴⁴

A dedicated Speed Dial hotline **1904** was launched for reporting difficulties related to: electricity, fuel, hospitals and emergency medical services, public

⁴¹<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-04-E.pdf>

⁴²<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-05-E.pdf>

⁴³<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-06-E.pdf>

⁴⁴<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-07-E.pdf>

transport and logistics, water and sanitation, food and essential commodities, telecommunications and ICT, irrigation and other gazetted essential services. Calls are received at the CGES Operations Centre, verified, prioritised, and forwarded to relevant sectoral response teams.

- **09 December 2025 – Infrastructure, Water Security, International Coordination and Logistics (Press Release, 09.30 PM, File No. 2025/08)**⁴⁵
Out of 298 affected road sections identified nationwide, 288 had been reopened. To accelerate repairs to roads, bridges, culverts, tanks, anicuts, and buildings, the National Procurement Commission was informed to increase the financial ceiling for contracts awarded to community-based organisations from Rs. 2 million to Rs. 5 million for the period 1 December 2025 to 31 March 2026. Approval was granted for the emergency procurement of sludge pumps to restore community water schemes, and the Finance Commission was advised to allocate 2026 funds for permanent rehabilitation of water projects that cannot be completed within 2025. To ensure an uninterrupted water supply, the Army and provincial water bowsers and private tankers were deployed. International partners, including UNDP, UNOPS, and IOM, were engaged for rapid assessments, logistics support, and displacement tracking, while the National Planning Department commenced the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment. Additional warehouses were allocated for the storage of local and foreign donations. By noon on 9 December 2025, hotline 1904 had received 1,340 complaints, and approximately 99 per cent of the national communications network had been restored.

6. Relief

A. Immediate Disaster Relief

On 28 November 2025, the Government issued **Disaster Relief Services Circular No. 01/2025**⁴⁶, together with an accompanying Amendment⁴⁷, which constitutes the principal administrative instrument governing the organisation, coordination, and implementation of immediate disaster relief. The Circular establishes a mandatory operational framework applicable to all Ministries, Departments, Provincial Councils, Local Authorities, District and Divisional Secretariats, and all public officers engaged in disaster response.

The Circular designates the District Secretary as the overall coordinating authority for immediate disaster relief operations within the respective district, and vests in the District Secretary the authority to coordinate the actions of all line agencies operating within the district and to issue operational directions to Divisional Secretaries in furtherance of the objectives of the Circular.

To operationalise the Circular, the Ministry of Defence issued detailed **Guidelines for Accelerated Disaster Relief Operations**⁴⁸ on 6 December 2025, with approval from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Ministry of Public Administration,

⁴⁵<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-08-E.pdf>

⁴⁶<http://www.ndrsc.gov.lk/web/phocadownload/disaster%20relief%20services%20circular%20012025.pdf>

⁴⁷https://sinhala.dgi.gov.lk/images/2025/28/Disaster_Relief_Services_circular_Amendment_01-2025.pdf

⁴⁸https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/disaster_relief_services_guideline_012025.pdf

Provincial Councils and Local Government. These Guidelines supplement Circular No.01/2025 and provide specific instructions for the execution of relief measures across sectors, including:

- Roles and responsibilities of district and divisional disaster management committees in relief delivery;
- Procedures for disbursing emergency allowances, including distribution of lump-sum assistance, are applicable irrespective of land ownership or income level.
- Assignment of tasks for preliminary assessment of affected school students, damaged houses, lost livelihoods, and displaced persons;
- Instructions for monitoring and resolving operational issues that arise during the disbursement of cash allowances and other relief;
- Coordination mechanisms between District Committees and Divisional Committees for consistent implementation of relief operations across jurisdictions.

B. Parliamentary & Budgetary Authorisation for Relief Funding

Pursuant to the emergency arising from Cyclone Ditwah, the Speaker of Parliament issued the **Extraordinary Gazette Notification No.2466/33⁴⁹ dated 12 December 2025**, convening a Special Sitting of Parliament to consider emergency funding needs. The Special Sitting was scheduled for 18 December 2025 in accordance with Standing Order 16, with continuation on 19 December 2025 for approval of a Supplementary Estimate.

The Government initially tabled a **Supplementary Estimate of LKR 500 billion**. Following updated damage, loss, and needs assessments conducted by line ministries and provincial and district administrations, a **revised Supplementary Estimate of LKR 1,000 billion** was submitted. Parliament approved the revised Supplementary Estimate, thereby authorising additional appropriations chargeable to the Consolidated Fund.⁵⁰

C. Financial Sector Relief & Banking Regulations

On 5 December 2025, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka issued **Banking Circular No. 04 of 2025⁵¹** to all Licensed Commercial Banks and Licensed Specialized Banks to provide relief to individuals and businesses affected by Cyclone Ditwah. Key requirements include:

- Moratoria on repayment of capital and/or interest for up to six months.
- Restructuring or rescheduling of loans without charging a penalty or additional interest.
- No downgrading of asset classification due to disaster-related delays.
- Consideration of new concessionary credit facilities for rehabilitation or recovery.

⁴⁹https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2466-33_E.pdf

⁵⁰<https://mawrataneews.lk/news/speaker-convenes-special-parliament-sitting-to-approve-rs-1000-bn-supplementary-estimate-for-cyclone-relief/>

⁵¹https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb_documents/laws/cdg/bsd_circular_no_4_of_2025_e.pdf

- Banks must identify eligible borrowers, maintain records, and submit periodic reports to the Bank Supervision Department.

On 9 January 2026, the Central Bank issued **Finance Company and Specialized Leasing Company Circular No. 01 of 2026**⁵², applying the same relief measures to Licensed Finance Companies, Specialized Leasing Companies, and other non-bank financial institutions. These institutions must follow the same requirements for moratoria, restructuring, asset classification, new facilities, and reporting to the Department of Supervision of Non-Bank Financial Institutions.

D. National Fiscal Relief & Enterprise Compensation

On 5 December 2025, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, acting as the national fiscal authority, issued **Budget Circular No. 08/2025**⁵³, establishing a government-funded financial assistance programme for individuals, households, and enterprises affected by Cyclone Ditwah. The circular authorises Accounting Officers and Chief Accounting Officers to incur expenditure from approved budget allocations and contingency provisions for:

- Home cleaning assistance;
- Replacement of essential household items;
- Subsistence allowances for temporarily displaced families;
- Livelihood restoration grants; and
- Concessional loan referral mechanisms through participating financial institutions.

Divisional Secretaries are designated as the primary field-level implementing authorities, responsible for beneficiary identification, verification of damage, certification of loss, and submission of payment schedules

On 20 December 2025, the Ministry issued **Budget Circular No. 08/2025(i)**⁵⁴, which expands and itemises enterprise-level assistance. The circular specifies:

- One-time, non-repayable grants of up to LKR 200,000 for registered micro and small enterprises that have experienced physical or operational loss. LKR 50,000 grants for unregistered home-based businesses and production units.
- LKR 25,000 grants for mobile, pavement, and temporary traders.
- Building repair assistance up to LKR 500,000 without a technical assessment for minor structural damage.
- Building repair or reconstruction assistance up to LKR 5,000,000, where a technical assessment report confirms substantial or major structural damage.

⁵²https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb_documents/laws/cdg/snbfi_circular_no_1_of_2026_e.pdf

⁵³<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/8322d7b1-c343-4a47-a4c3-27a1c7baa7ec>

⁵⁴<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/a50e4973-227b-4b84-acf2-42748ac25738>

The circular prescribes documentary requirements, including Grama Niladhari certification, photographic evidence, and divisional-level verification committees.

On 22 January 2026, the Ministry issued **Budget Circular No. 08/2025(iii)**⁵⁵, introducing enterprise concessional loan ceilings:

- LKR 250,000 for micro enterprises;
- LKR 1,000,000 for small enterprises;
- Up to LKR 25,000,000 for medium and large enterprises.

Loans carry a fixed interest rate of 3% per annum, a six-month grace period, and a repayment term of up to three years. Participating banks are instructed to process loans under government interest-subsidy arrangements and maintain separate loan portfolio tracking. Participating banks are instructed to process such loans under government interest-subsidy arrangements and maintain separate loan portfolio tracking.

E. Housing Damage & Reconstruction Compensation

The Government issued **Disaster Relief Services Circular No. 01/2025**⁵⁶, with an accompanying Amendment⁵⁷, and Guidelines⁵⁸ establishing an administrative framework for housing damage assessment, relief, and reconstruction following Cyclone Ditwah. The Circular designated District Secretaries as overall coordinators of housing damage and reconstruction operations at the district level, with authority to direct Divisional Secretaries and line agencies and maintain beneficiary and expenditure records.

Budget Circulars 08/2025⁵⁹ and **08/2025 (i)**⁶⁰ issued by the Ministry of Finance formalised the financial framework for affected households. The Circulars provide:

- Immediate cash advance: LKR 25,000 per household for cleaning and restoration of damaged homes;
- Household/kitchen essentials: LKR 50,000;
- Monthly living or rental support: as applicable;
- Reconstruction grants for fully destroyed houses: up to LKR 5,000,000;
- Death or total disability compensation: up to LKR 1,000,000.

⁵⁵<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/8d93c8ad-5091-4f96-b486-6972c63212dc>

⁵⁶<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-07-E.pdf>

⁵⁷<https://ocges.gov.lk/pdf/2025-08-E.pdf>,

⁵⁸<https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/disaster-relief-services-guideline-012025.pdf>

⁵⁹<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/8322d7b1-c343-4a47-a4c3-27a1c7baa7ec>

⁶⁰<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/a50e4973-227b-4b84-acf2-42748ac25738>

Ministry of Defence **Circulars NDRSC/02/04/10, issued on 30 November⁶¹ and 2 December 2025⁶²**, authorised the immediate disbursement of cash advances and allowances to households affected by Cyclone Ditwah, enabling safe re-occupation of damaged homes before full reconstruction. The Circulars applied to all households in National Disaster Areas declared under the Extraordinary Gazette No. 2465/08⁶³.

On **6 January 2026**, the Ministry of Defence, in coordination with the National Building Research Organisation (NBRO), issued **Circular NDRSC/02/04/10**, containing guidelines on housing compensation⁶⁴. The Guidelines classify housing damage based on structural integrity:

- Houses with structural damage exceeding 65 percent or certified unsafe by NBRO are eligible for reconstruction grants up to LKR 5,000,000.
- Partially damaged houses receive graded compensation bands according to severity.
- Beneficiaries reconstructing on their own land receive staged cash disbursements tied to verified construction progress.
- Landless beneficiaries may be considered for state land allocation or government-constructed housing units, subject to eligibility and availability.

Divisional Secretaries are responsible for preparing and maintaining beneficiary lists, monitoring reconstruction progress, and certifying eligibility for disbursements.

F. Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries Relief

Relief and compensation for agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sectors affected by Cyclone Ditwah are implemented under the **national fiscal relief framework established by Budget Circular No. 08/2025 dated 5 December 2025⁶⁵**, together with its subsequent implementing circulars **08/2025(i) dated 20 December 2025⁶⁶** and **08/2025(iii) dated 22 January 2026⁶⁷** issued by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

1) Livestock Sector Compensation

Compensation for loss or damage in the livestock sector is provided as grant assistance. Eligible beneficiaries include registered farms and livestock holders that have sustained loss or damage to animals, animal shelters, equipment, or productive

⁶¹<https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/e0b6bbe0b794.10000.00e0b69a-e0b685e0b6ade0b78ae0b6ade0b792e0b69ae0b78fe0b6bbe0b6b8e0b69ae0b78a-e0b6bde0b6b6e0b78fe0b6afe0b793e0b6b8-1.pdf>

⁶²<https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/e0b686e0b6b4e0b6afe0b78f-e0b783e0b784e0b6b1-e0b6bde0b6b6e0b78f-e0b69ce0b790e0b6b1e0b793e0b6b8-1.pdf>

⁶³https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2465-08_E.pdf

⁶⁴<https://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=116936>

⁶⁵<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/8322d7b1-c343-4a47-a4c3-27a1c7baa7ec>

⁶⁶<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/a50e4973-227b-4b84-acf2-42748ac25738>

⁶⁷<https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/8d93c8ad-5091-4f96-b486-6972c63212dc>

capacity as a result of Cyclone Ditwah. Indicative compensation ceilings under sectoral instructions include:

- Cross-bred cattle: up to **LKR 200,000 per animal**, subject to a maximum per holding;
- Local cattle: up to **LKR 50,000 per animal**, subject to a maximum per holding;
- Swine: up to **LKR 20,000 per animal**;
- Goats and sheep: up to **LKR 20,000 per animal**;
- Poultry: differentiated rates for layers and broilers;
- Backyard poultry units: fixed unit-based grant.

Eligibility and extent of loss are verified through field inspections by officers of the Department of Animal Production and Health, in coordination with Grama Niladharis and Divisional Secretaries. Grants compensate for the value of lost animals and may include limited support for veterinary treatment, feed replacement, and minor structural repairs.

2) Crop Damage Compensation

One-time crop damage grants are provided for crops destroyed, submerged, or rendered unproductive due to Cyclone Ditwah. Indicative grant rates applied by implementing agencies include:

- Paddy and staple field crops: grant per hectare;
- Vegetables and high-value annual crops: higher grant per hectare;
- Perennial crops and minor export crops: grant determined by crop type, age, stage of growth, and percentage of verified loss.

Crop damage is verified by Agrarian Service Centres, Grama Niladharis, and field officers of the Department of Agriculture or other relevant technical agencies. Divisional Secretaries compile beneficiary lists and forward certified schedules through district administrative channels for Treasury release.

3) Fisheries and Aquatic Livelihood Compensation

Compensation is provided for losses in the marine, coastal, inland fisheries, and aquaculture sectors. Relief measures include:

- Grant assistance for registered fishing vessels that are totally or partially damaged;
- Grant assistance for damaged fishing gear, including nets and related equipment;
- Provision of fishing gear, fingerlings, and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of fish ponds, hatcheries, and aquaculture facilities.

Damage verification is conducted by Fisheries Inspectors, Fisheries Cooperative Societies, and Divisional Secretaries. Certified beneficiary lists are submitted through district administrative channels for payment.

4) Crop Insurance Compensation

The Agricultural and Agrarian Insurance Board (AAIB) processes insurance claims for insured crops under the Agricultural and Agrarian Insurance Act.

Farmers with insured crops may lodge claims through Agrarian Service Centres or AAIB regional offices within prescribed reporting periods. Claims are assessed based on crop type, stage of cultivation, and verified extent of damage. Settlement is made in accordance with existing insurance policy conditions and procedures.

5) Support for Unregistered Farmers and Smallholders

Humanitarian assistance is provided for unregistered farmers and small-scale producers. Eligibility is determined by Divisional Secretaries based on field verification, administrative records, cooperative society lists, or other locally available data sources. Assistance may include small grants for seeds, planting material, tools, and basic inputs, and access to technical extension services.

G. Continuity of Public Administration

Following the cyclone's landfall and widespread infrastructure disruption, the President directed District Secretaries and District Development Committee Chairpersons on **28 November 2025** to expedite rescue and relief operations without procedural or financial delay and instructed the Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration to issue a circular to overcome administrative constraints arising from existing procedures; this directive expressly empowered local administrators to utilise available funds and personnel immediately for emergency response.⁶⁸

In furtherance of that directive, the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government issued **Public Administration Circular No. 32/2025 dated 15 December 2025**⁶⁹, granting **special leave** to public officers who were unable to report for duty due to the impacts of Cyclone Ditwah—including breakdowns in transport services, road obstructions, and displacement caused by floods, earth slips and related conditions; the circular requires submission of a leave request certified by the Grama Niladhari and Divisional Secretary and is applicable for periods when officers were prevented from attending work by circumstances beyond their control. The details of special leave are to be recorded in institutional leave registers, and the arrangement applies specifically to the disaster period in November and December 2025.

To recognise and commend the continued service of public officers in maintaining essential functions amid ongoing emergency conditions, the Ministry also issued **Public Administration Circular No. 34/2025 dated 30 December 2025**⁷⁰, which acknowledges the extraordinary efforts of public servants in providing continuity of services and restoring normal government operations in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah. The circular highlights the dual challenges faced by public officers: restoring disrupted public life and infrastructure services while simultaneously rebuilding in the

⁶⁸<https://www.newswire.lk/2025/11/28/president-issues-new-circular-to-speed-up-disaster-relief-removes-financial-barriers/>

⁶⁹<https://pubad.gov.lk/web/images/circulars/2025/E/1765796549-32-2025-e.pdf>

⁷⁰<https://pubad.gov.lk/web/images/circulars/2025/E/1767080546-34-2025-e.pdf>

context of extensive disaster impact, thereby affirming administrative expectations for sustained performance through the transition into 2026.

In addition to these specific circulars, the Government, under presidential authority, designated a range of services—including **District Secretariats and Divisional Secretariats and their field officers**—as **essential services** via Extraordinary Gazette notifications first issued on **29 November 2025**⁷¹ and extended in December 2025⁷² to maintain continuity of vital public functions and service delivery. The essential services designation covers electricity, water supply, food services, transport, health services, telecommunications, and other critical sectors necessary for public administration continuity during the disaster period.

F. NGO/ Foreign Partner Coordination and Operations

The Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment issued **Circular MRDSS&CE/5/3/1/361 dated 29 November 2025**⁷³, entitled “*Coordination of Non-Governmental Organizations to Provide Relief to the Affected People due to Adverse Weather Condition*”. The circular mandates that all NGO relief activities — including the provision of food, water, sanitation, shelter, and livelihood support — be coordinated through the District NGO Coordinator and the District NGO Coordination Committee in each affected district. The objectives are to ensure that interventions are timely, properly organised, responsive to genuine needs, and aligned with Government relief priorities, while avoiding duplication and ensuring coverage across all Divisional Secretariat Divisions within affected districts.

In early December 2025, the Ministry of Defence issued **Guidelines for Accelerated Disaster Relief Operations**⁷⁴. These guidelines direct District and Divisional Secretaries to incorporate NGO and INGO activity, including foreign-funded interventions, into district-level relief coordination structures. They delineate operational roles for committees overseeing the implementation of Government-led relief programmes and ensure that all external actor activity is processed through official district channels.

On 23 December 2025, the Department of External Resources issued **Circular ERD/SC/Gen-II**⁷⁵, titled *Mandatory Coordination for the Engagement with External Bilateral and Multilateral Partners, both Local and Foreign in View of the Natural Disaster Caused by Ditwah Cyclone*. This circular requires all Government ministries, departments, and partner entities, including NGOs and INGOs, to coordinate all interactions with foreign bilateral and multilateral partners through Government-designated channels. The purpose is to ensure consistent engagement, prevent

⁷¹https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/11/2464-29_E.pdf

⁷²https://documents.gov.lk/view/extra-gazettes/2025/12/2468-46_E.pdf

⁷³https://civilsocietycollectiveforemergencyresponse.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/cso-coordination_ministry-of-rural-development.pdf

⁷⁴<https://english.newsfirst.lk/2025/12/14/ministry-of-defence-issues-guidelines-for-accelerated-disaster-relief-operations>

⁷⁵https://www.erd.gov.lk/images/2025/Mandatory_Coordination_for_the_Engagement_with_External_Bilateral_and_Multilateral_Partners_both_Local_and_Foreign_in_View_of_the_Natural_Disaster_Caused_by_Ditwah_Cyclone.pdf; https://www.erd.gov.lk/index.php?Itemid=219&id=55&lang=en&option=com_content&view=article

duplication, maintain accountability, and provide oversight over foreign assistance mobilized in response to Cyclone Ditwah.

The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) issued **Guidelines for Sending Overseas Relief Items** in December 2025⁷⁶. These guidelines require NGOs, INGOs, and foreign missions to provide prior notification, submit documentation, and obtain clearance for all imported relief consignments. The guidelines ensure that all external relief assistance is systematically integrated into official Government distribution planning.

7. Government Appeal for External Support

Following the catastrophic impact of Cyclone Ditwah, the Government of Sri Lanka formally appealed for international disaster relief and humanitarian support. On 29 November 2025, the President declared a nationwide State of Emergency and simultaneously requested immediate disaster relief and humanitarian assistance from the international community to support response and recovery operations⁷⁷.

On 3 December 2025, the Government convened a high-level donor forum co-chaired by the Secretary to the Treasury and the Governor of the Central Bank, bringing together diplomatic missions, bilateral and multilateral development partners, and international financial institutions. Senior Government representatives, including officials from the Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Disaster Management Centre, and the Treasury Departments, presented damage assessments and articulated urgent needs for external support, particularly in rapid humanitarian assistance, concessional financing, food supplies, and medium-term aid. Partner representatives reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Sri Lanka during the emergency.⁷⁸

On 4 December 2025, Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya and the Minister of Foreign Affairs co-chaired a diplomatic briefing to the foreign diplomatic community and international organisations accredited to Sri Lanka, providing an update on national relief efforts, recovery priorities, and reconstruction planning following the extensive damage caused by the cyclone. In this briefing, the Prime Minister thanked diplomatic missions for support and invited international partners to contribute to priority areas, including restoration of essential services, transport infrastructure rehabilitation, water and sanitation, and broader rebuilding efforts.⁷⁹

The United Nations and humanitarian partners launched the Humanitarian Priorities Plan (HPP) on 11 December 2025, calling for US\$35.3 million to provide life-saving assistance to communities most severely affected by Cyclone Ditwah. This plan follows the SL government appeals and joint rapid needs assessments conducted with the Disaster Management Centre. It outlines sectors, including food security, health,

⁷⁶https://www.dmc.gov.lk/images/pdfs/Relief_%20Items_%20%20Communities_%20Cyclone%20Ditwah.pdf

⁷⁷<https://srilanka.un.org/en/307212-cyclone-ditwah-situation-report-16-december-2025>

⁷⁸<https://www.news.lk/current-affairs/international-development-partners-pledge-strong-support-for-sri-lankas-relief-and-recovery-after-cyclone-ditwah>

⁷⁹<https://www.pmooffice.gov.lk/news.php?para=RU5vekFVR2dpQTd2VGRIkZUNE4wS1Z4dHdxY0h2MkZGYIRoRGtYa1J4RnQ0aUF1SzVUSjFCbHNYMEJEaURYSw==>

protection, shelter, water/sanitation, and early recovery, where international support is required. The HPP targets assistance for approximately 658,000 of the most vulnerable people between December 2025 and April 2026 and consolidates the UN's coordinated appeal to the bilateral and multilateral donor community.⁸⁰

As part of the UN's immediate response mechanism, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated US\$4.5 million to strengthen emergency food assistance, shelter support, and water, sanitation, and hygiene services across affected communities. This allocation was made available shortly after the appeal and is part of the UN's multilateral engagement with Sri Lanka's national response.⁸¹

⁸⁰<https://srilanka.un.org/en/306891-united-nations-and-humanitarian-partners-call-us35-million-provide-life-saving-assistance>

⁸¹<https://srilanka.un.org/en/306739-united-nations-allocates-us45-million-its-global-emergency-fund-support-sri-lankans-affected>