

Situation Report No.6
Flooding in Thailand - Emergency Response & Early Recovery
Date of Report: 25 November 2011

CONTEXT

Updates:

The death toll from the worst flooding in years has risen to 615 with three people missing, the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department reported on Wednesday. Officials said that 125 districts in 17 provinces remained flooded, with 4.9 million people affected.

Flooding continues in Nakhon Sawan, Chai Nat, Ang Thong, Ayutthaya, Lop Buri, Saraburi, Suphan Buri, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Sakorn, Samut Prakan, Ubon Ratchathani, Roi Et, Chacheongsao, Nakhon Nayok, Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi and the capital Bangkok. About 11 million rai (4.4 million acres, 6,872 square miles) of farmland and 210 roads have been damaged by the flooding which began in late July.

The flooding situation in Bangkok is easing and should be completely dry by New Year's Eve. However people living in inundated Bangkok districts are still struggling with trash and complaining about stinking and filthy flood waters. Rubbish collected from Sai Mai, Thawee Watthana, Nong Khaem, Don Muang and Bang Khae districts is less than half of the usual amount. Since the runoff raged into the capital, garbage trucks have been unable to make their rounds in many heavily flooded zones and mounting piles of garbage have further polluted the flood water. The waste problem would get worse after flood victims return to their homes and throw out damaged stuff. In Bangkok, garbage accumulation remains a widespread concern, although the Governor of Bangkok reported that on 22 November alone, 9,280 tonnes were collected, 1,036 of those in recently-drained Bang Plad district.

To treat the water, effective micro-organism balls and liquid have been mixed and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has recruited 915 volunteers to rake the refuse out of the flooded zones. Flood waters have continued to recede in many parts of Bangkok and the levels of the Mon, Bangkok Yai and Lat Phrao canals have continued to drop.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has refused to provide special compensation to the people on the outskirts of Bangkok whose communities have been kept flooded to protect the inner city and its financial centres. She has rejected a proposal from the government's Flood Relief Operation Center (FROC) that the government make a daily payment of 500-1,000 baht to each of flood victims trapped behind the dykes in Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi and Nakhon Pathom provinces, and in some suburban areas of Bangkok. 'All areas are in the same trouble. I sympathise with them and I am trying to offer adequate assistance'. At present, the government pays 5,000 baht as immediate compensation to each flooded family and up to 30,000 baht for each flood-damaged house.

To date 21,257 businesses and 834,995 employees have been affected by the floods. Losses of USD 13 billion from 891 factories and 460,000 affected workers have been estimated for 7 of the worst affected industrial estates. Exports grew by 0.3% in October, the lowest growth in two years.

After the recent "Big Cleaning" operation, some of the 90 manufacturing plants at Bangpa-in Industrial Estate are expected to resume production next month, along with businesses at other inundated estates. About 2,000 workers from the 90 plants joined the clean-up, marking the complete drainage of water from the industrial estate in Ayutthaya and the start of rehabilitation and rebuilding to restore investor confidence. Among the seven flooded estates in Ayutthaya and

Pathum Thani provinces, Bangpa-in is the second to achieve dry status, with Factory Land being the first to do so.

Draining water out of inundated industrial estates has been a priority of the government, as the disruptions are expected to cost nearly Bt200 billion. About 90 of the 143 factories at the estate in Ayutthaya will restart production on December 11, the authority said. Meanwhile, Rojana Industrial Park in Ayutthaya, where several hundred Honda vehicles have been submerged for months, is expected to complete drainage operations by the end of the month, with about 140 plants out of 236 targeted to resume production around mid-December. Saha Rattana Nakorn, the first industrial estate in Ayutthaya to be hit by the flooding, will be the last in the province to start drainage, which is scheduled for December 8. About 35 of its 46 plants are expected to resume production on December 20. Inundated on October 15, Bangpa-in Industrial Estate completed the drainage of 8 million cubic metres of water on November 17 Thursday. The Provincial Electricity Authority has started supplying power for half of the factories on the estate.

Public Health still remains a high priority in inundated and recently dry areas, mosquitoes are invading the waters and the risk of malaria is extremely high. In addition there are reported outbreaks of diarrhea and leptospirosis - both of which can be fatal if not treated properly - and other diseases, as well as cold and flu, and infections of wounds, which are common in the event of floods.

To serve flood evacuees in Bangkok-based shelters, kitchens supervised by the Bureau of Social Development are making ready-to-eat meals and providing accommodation on a daily basis, while small-time fruit planters will be eligible for a limited amount of funding. Those who suffer from stress are being given counseling. The Pollution Control Department (PCD) is offering free eggs and rice to people who turn over used foam food boxes and empty plastic bottles - in a bid to ease the amount of garbage. "Get one egg if you hand over 20 foam boxes. Get 2 kilos of uncooked rice if you come with 20 plastic bottles" The scheme has attracted an enthusiastic response. A big crowd was seen waiting to turn garbage into food at a PCD booth in Don Muang. The exchange service will be available until November 30. Flooding has hit the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA's) garbage collection operations hard. As a result, flood victims have had to live with mountains of garbage in some areas.

As a result of ongoing heavy rain in the southern provinces, Phattalung has been declared an emergency flood disaster area, under an additional case beginning 21 November. Flooding is also being experienced in Nakhon Si Thammarat and Yala, while flash floods were reported in Suratthani on 22 November.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN THAILAND

- The Disaster Prevention & Mitigation Department reported Wednesday 23 November that flooding was still affecting 19 of 77 provinces affecting 4.9 million people. Since July floods have affected 3.3 million households and approx 11.3 million people in 64 of the 77 provinces.
- 615 people have died primarily due to drowning and electrocution. This is an increase of 21 in the last week, compared to 61 in the previous week.
- An estimated 1.2 million workers have been affected in urban areas, and many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) don't have the means to pay their workers.
- As of 23 November, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) has processed 17,854 of the 2,289,562 households eligible for the THB 5,000 compensation scheme, these being newly eligible ones according to the Cabinet resolution of 15 November.
- The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has begun a programme of spraying insecticides and EM material to control mosquitoes in flooded areas.

- The Royal Irrigation Department has been using as many as 660 pumps, installed along both banks of the Chao Phraya River, to direct run-offs towards the sea. These pumps can handle 123 million cubic meters of water every day. On the western side, there are 336 pumps that have the capacity to handle 80 million cubic meters. In the eastern zone, there are 324 pumps that have a total capacity to handle 43 million cubic meters of water each day. Pumps will also be used to drain floods out of Nakhonsawan and Ayutthaya.
- Authorities last month released more than 9 billion cubic meters of water to run its course from the north to the sea. Rainfall this year has exceeded the average by about 40 percent, according to government data.
- While water levels in lower northern and central areas show signs of receding flooding continues to threaten parts of central Bangkok & nearby provinces of Nakhon Pathom, Samut Sakorn.
- It has been reported that 2,047 schools remain damaged.
- The Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) reports that 2,281 evacuation centres are identified in 22 provinces, providing shelter for 115,400 people as of 23 November. The highest numbers of evacuees at present are reported in Nakhon Pathom, Bangkok, Nonthaburi and Ayutthaya.
- 164 of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) shelters are operating, housing 13,445 evacuees.

CARITAS THAILAND RESPONSE

- The 'Emergency Response Committee (ERC) set up by Caritas Thailand continues to meet 3 days a week for planning and reporting purposes.
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) continues to facilitate the ERC by providing support in program manager.
- ERC continues to coordinate for the planning and implementation of the response with the Diocesan Social Action Centers (DISACs) at Nakhonsawan and Bangkok as well as other DISACs in northeast of the country and the responsible Desks of Caritas Thailand.
- The appointed personnel for Emergency Relief and Early Recovery including Distribution, WASH, Livelihood, and Health continue to meet, plan and execute planned interventions.
- For sustainability purposes particularly in livelihood and health interventions communities and volunteers are being trained.
- Good base Line surveys are being promoted by the active involvement of communities and volunteers in the process.
- In the present phase, many people including victims, young adults from high school to university level, volunteer to help in the activities towards the flood victims.
- Flood Response Appeal launched to the Caritas Confederation has received support of 109 percent of the appeal.
- Appeals and acceptance of support from within Thailand continues.
- Media coverage continues such as the use of local church newspaper, TV and radio channels as well as www.facebook.com/THAICatholics.Floods for people participation, all of these have been operated with the close coordination and collaboration with Catholic Social Communications of Thailand and Social Commissions in all dioceses.
- The issue of Trauma Counseling not only for the victims but also for Caritas Thailand staff some of whom are also victims needs consideration.
- Schools are still closed in some areas. Where good schools exist, they give homework on their website for students to do and keep busy.

Support/Assistance Provided During 19th to 25th November 2011:

Support/Assistance	Achievements
Food and non-food supplies; Food item; rice, Instant noodles, canned fish, other food items, medicines, drinking water, etc. Non-food; flashlights, sanitary napkins, tissues, soaps, shampoo, mosquito repellent, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution: food and non-food packs to over 1,630 families in 6 provinces through collaboration with Diocesan Social Action Centers (DISACs), Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM) and volunteers.
Water and Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drinking water resource mapping with religious congregations and schools for current and future disasters in both Bangkok Archdiocese and Nakhonsawan Diocese. - 68 Volunteers were trained for WASH; 40 in Nakhonsawan and 28 in Bangkok. - Distribution of 300 WASH kits to Nakhonsawan Diocese. - Distribution of EM balls to public places in Bangkok.
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through coordination with Diocese of Nakhonsawan, Desk for Health Pastoral Care of Caritas Thailand with Catholic Health Care Provider Association of Thailand; Camillian Task Force, St. Louis Hospital and its Foundation organized a mobile medical service to 2 Sub-districts in Nakhonsawan Province. There were over 350 people being diagnosed and treated. - 68 Health volunteers were trained on how to support victims of health problems relating to water born diseases.
Livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for volunteers, organized by Nakhonsawan Diocese, in order to assess the situation and needs and plan for the possible activities in Nakhonsawan Province. - Cash for Work to support flood victims through the 'Big Cleaning Day' to help recover the public places was planned. - The needs assessment forms were designed and sent to Archdiocese of Bangkok. - Community program proposals on livelihood and early recovery were received by Diocese of Nakhonsawan from the community groups to obtain support from the appeal. - Livelihood Proposal was received from DISAC Chiang Mai for Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai provinces.
Other supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 34 Lifejackets and 3 boats were given for affected people in Ayutthaya and Bang Buathong. - Personal hygiene pads for elderly in the evacuation center in Ratchaburi.

Donation Update/Pledges received:

Caritas Member Organizations	Amount– EUR
Caritas Thailand	73,000
Caritas Germany	40,000
CRS	143,000
Trocaire (Caritas Ireland)	10,000
Caritas Korea	35,750
Caritas Austria	30,000
Caritas Italiana	30,000

Caritas Member Organizations	Amount– EUR
Development & Peace (Canada)	35,750
Caritas Australia	22,500
Caritas Spain	30,000
Charis Singapore	50,000
OBOS (Caritas Seoul)	17,881
CAFOD (Caritas England and Wales)	17,881
Caritas Japan	30,000
Caritas Taiwan	10,000
Caritas New Zealand	7,152
Caritas Hong Kong	27,578
Caritas Belgium	10,000
KARINA (Caritas Indonesia)	8,087
Total	628,579

Note:

1. The total pledge received has now reached 109% of the Appeal made to the Caritas confederation.
2. The flood response by the Catholic Church in Thailand is being further supported by MISEREOR (Germany) and Manos Unidas (Spain).
3. Donations in-kind have been received from the Thai and non-Thai people such as drinking water, canned fishes, plastic sheets, blankets, rice, dried food,
4. No further supplies will be received from the Flood Relief Operation Center (FROC).

Coordination:

Caritas Thailand continues to be in coordination with organizations on the response as follows;

Church groups

- Diocesan Social Action Centers (DISACs) in affected dioceses especially Diocese of Nakhon sawan and Archdiocese of Bangkok; planning and implementation in all components; distribution of supplies, WASH and Health since the beginning of flood response. Now we are starting to assess needs and plan towards the Livelihood activities.
- Caritas Thailand Desks including COERR, Health and NCCM; planning and implementation
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS); Specific expertises; emergency response management, WASH and Livelihood
- Caritas Asia; Communication
- COERR Volunteers; Food making, transportation & distribution
- Camillian Task Force; Mobile medical services & expertise
- St. Louis Foundation (St. Louis Hospital); Mobile medical services & expertise
- Catholic Health Care Provider Association of Thailand; Providing doctors and nurses
- Catholic Business Executive Group (CBEG); Emergency response and coordination
- Catholic young Executive Society (C-Yes); Emergency response and coordination
- Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS); Emergency response and coordination (in Migrant community)
- Religious Congregations; Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sisters of St. Paul De Chartre, Sisters of St. Josep of Apparition, Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Redemptorist fathers, Salesians of Don Bosco, Brothers of St. Gabriel, Sisters of Holy Infant of Jesus, Daughters of the Queenship of Mary, Brothers of La Salle, Camillian, etc.
- Various Catholic Schools; Emergency response and coordination

Non-Church groups

- Save the Children; Emergency response and coordination
- Doctors without Borders; Mobile medical services
- Embassy of Myanmar; support towards Burmese migrants
- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- German Chamber of Commerce
- Unites States of America Chamber of Commerce
- Mirror Foundation; Emergency response and coordination

Government ministries/agencies

- Flood Relief Operations Center (FROC); donations of flood relief supplies
- Thai Red Cross: donations of non-food relief supplies
- Ministry of Public Health; water and sanitation
- Ministry of Labours; transportation
- Royal Thai Army; transportation & delivery

Stories:

1. Thailand Flood: Reaching the Most Vulnerable During a Crisis - by Elizabeth Tromans/CRS



Fr. June in the hospitality house, where he has been assisting migrants to recover from recent floods in Thailand. Photo Elizabeth Tromans/CRS

At the foot of an overpass about 40 km northeast from the central business area of Bangkok, Fr. Ongart Kaesue, known as Fr. June, pulls over his truck and announces, “This is where the flood begins.” To the right a volunteer wearing a bright orange vest repeats monotone messages into a megaphone warning people to drive slowly. He asks drivers their destination in order to arrange rides for the dozens of people standing on a nearby platform. “Saphan Mai,” says Fr. June to the volunteer in the orange vest, and the volunteer shouts the location into the megaphone. A few people with bags of groceries climb into the back of the truck and we cautiously continue into the standing water.

Fr. June didn’t realize the calamity ahead of him when he began working with the National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM), a Desk within Caritas Thailand, four months ago; he had only just been ordained as a priest in the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI).

Fr. June’s passion for working with migrants is palpable as soon as he begins to tell me about the people in his area. “The reason that I help them, why I help the migrants more than Thai people,” he says, “is because they are at a severe disadvantage. They can’t get help from the government like Thai people can.”

NCCM provides assistance throughout Thailand to migrants from neighboring countries.



Standing water and damaged storefronts near Bangkok, where recent flooding has caused over 600 casualties. Photo Elizabeth Tromans/CRS

In Saphan Mai the majority of migrants come from neighboring Myanmar and cannot access many government benefits that Thai citizens can, including aid relief for the recent floods. Many migrants are daily wage laborers, doing the heavy work associated with the more than 500 stalls in the Saphan Mai market, like bringing loads of food on trolleys. Each day they search for a job in the hope that they can earn an income that day.

The residents of Saphan Mai first saw the water rapidly rising at the end of October. At its highest level it was 120 cm (nearly 4 feet) and has only decreased to 67 cm (just over 2 feet). Migrants living near to the riverbanks were the first to be forced from their homes. Many homes are completely destroyed and yet they anticipate that flood water will remain for at least a month yet.

When we approach Saphan Mai and a few more travelers have come into or out of the back of the truck along the way, Fr. June begins to wave and greet people wading through the filthy water. We leave the truck in the highest available place, roll up the legs of our pants and begin wading towards the main road. A small wooden boat appears and we climb in to paddle the 2 blocks to Hospitality House, which belongs to the Archdiocese of Bangkok and acts as NCCM's center of operations. When we reach it we balance our way across beams propped up in the rubbish filled, tar-colored water filling the first floor of the house to allow access to the second. Fr. June expertly scurries across the narrow beams and climbs over the stairway railing and up the stairs. I follow less confidently behind him.



Ali Mohammad (far left) and Fr. June (second from left) pose with other migrants and workers at NCCM. Photo Elizabeth Tromans/CRS

In normal times Hospitality House provides social awareness programs for migrants on topics like health education and Thai culture. Since the floods more than 200 migrants have come to the house where they can eat a free meal and have a place to sleep. Many of the migrants coming regularly are those who previously lived in shacks along the riverbank, whose homes and belongings were quickly lost as waters rose. Now, Fr. June says, "The migrants are coming to me saying, 'We don't have a job. We don't have money for food. And now we have a problem to pay the rent of our homes.'"

"Migrants feel afraid of the government," he goes on. "But in this house we run just like the government ideally should. We help them, we serve them. My hope is that when they are going back home they can do the same thing for someone else. That's my dream."

Ali Mohammad, 24, is a migrant laborer from Myanmar. Before the flood he was able to find work every day, bringing goods to the market for about 15 baht (about \$0.50) per load. Since the 26th of October he's been taking meals at Hospitality House because he can no longer find work. When the waters recede he thinks he can find work again, but for now he can't pay his bills. He doesn't have any of his own family in Thailand to rely on for support and is grateful for the assistance provided at Hospitality House.

Fr. June chimes in to excitedly explain what he sees as the main success in these three weeks of the flood: “Before the flood migrants were not confident to come. Now they come as if it’s their home. And they know what this house does, too! They will come back after the flood and we can help them.

“I try to encourage them that if they want help, ask for help! I’m asking that you ask for help for surviving, for taking care of yourself and the other people in this community.”

Fr. June and I sip cold bottled water, an increasingly expensive and sometimes rare commodity in the flooded areas, and I ask him about the links he has been trying to make in order to bring assistance to his community in Saphan Mai. He unassumingly responds, “My role is not about getting money. My role is getting one person to help another person. If we can do this together, we will have succeeded.”

2. Photos

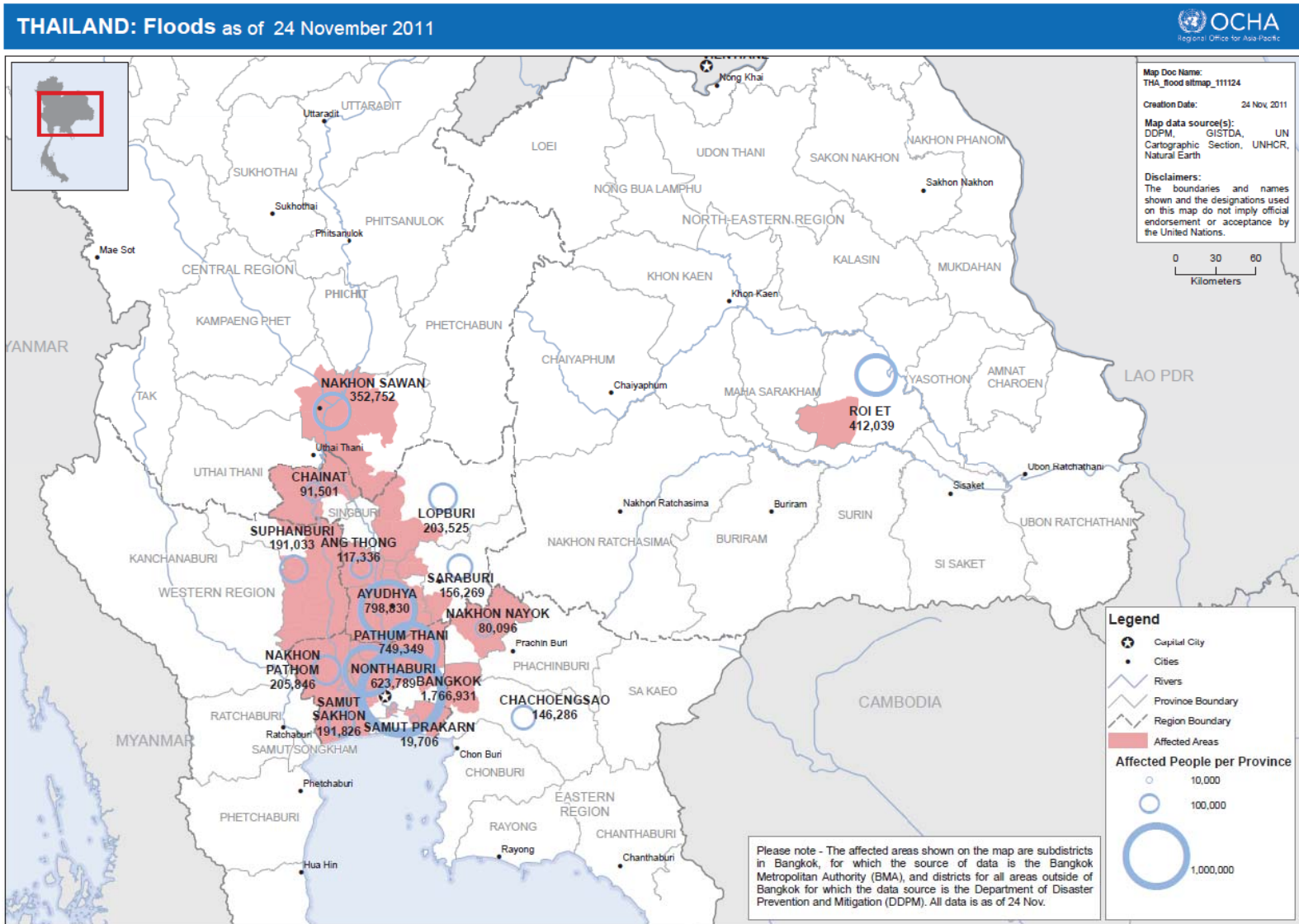
Photos of Caritas’ flood relief work in Thailand: <http://flickr.com/gp/27673812@N05/Yf971j/>

3. To view current map of flood affected areas in Thailand

Thai Flood Map: <http://www.thaiflood.com/en/>

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THAILAND: Flooding around the Bangkok Metropolitan Area as of 24 November 2011

