



## ShelterBox sends team to Sri Lanka after worst monsoon flooding and mudslides since 2003

**Half a million people affected, around 85,000 made homeless. UK disaster relief shelter experts ShelterBox respond to Sri Lankan Government's call for aid**

ShelterBox, UK shelter experts based in Truro, Cornwall, is sending a team to Sri Lanka tomorrow (1st June, 2017) to assess the need for the charity's specialist aid – including sturdy weatherproof tents, emergency lighting, mosquito nets, and water filtration and carriers.

The team will be re-establishing partnerships with the Sri Lankan Government, colleague charities and local Rotary Clubs in response to the Sri Lankan government's appeal to the United Nations for help with rescue and relief. The shelter experts responded to monsoon flooding and mudslides in Sri Lanka at this time last year, meaning they have developed the best possible experience in how to deal with flooding on the island and will be working with partners and the Sri Lanka government to share their expertise.

ShelterBox Operations Team Lead, James Luxton said, **'This is déjà vu on a horrifying scale. I was with our team last year and I'm flying tomorrow again to meet up with our in-country contacts to carry out urgent assessments to help local families and communities.'**

**'Last year's response has given us solid experience of how best to level and drain sites so tents can be safely pitched. But the conditions are bad, monsoon rains are still falling, and many rivers are still overflowing. We know from monitoring our aid provision last year what will work best, and we'll be offering that expertise to the Sri Lanka authorities, with whom we already have a good working relationship.'**

In this latest monsoon tragedy the island's emergency services are currently dealing with the rescue phase, and many people are housed in temporary shelters away from the flood zones. Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) warns that the death toll may rise as reports come in from outlying areas. But when the floodwaters recede there could be a need for temporary shelter of the kind provided by ShelterBox.

Sri Lanka is particularly vulnerable to this 'moving earth' mudslide phenomenon, having cleared land over decades to grow export crops such as tea and rubber. When the rains fall this deforested landscape can quickly become a torrent of mud with collapsing hillsides.

In 2016, ShelterBox provided tents and other aid to hundreds of families across six different camps. The work was complex because land had to be levelled and drained before it could be used safely for pitches, ensuring occupants wouldn't be at risk from further storms and flooding. ShelterBox

teams worked in partnership with the Rotary Club of Capital City in Colombo, who provided invaluable in-country local knowledge from a network of Rotarians across the island, and with the International Organisation for Migration and World Vision.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- We can offer interviews with our team before they depart, and once in Sri Lanka, communications and workload allowing. Please arrange via [marknicholson@shelterbox.org](mailto:marknicholson@shelterbox.org) or Tel 07584 489194.
- The photos above are free to use in the context of this press release. Left: A ShelterBox camp established after last year's flooding. Right: Local Rotarians rescue flooded villagers during the current monsoon.
- There are now almost 85 million people around the world forced from their homes due to natural disasters or conflict, the greatest number since WW2. ShelterBox is a UK charity, and a world authority on providing innovative, rapid and practical shelter to families in some of the world's hardest-to-reach places and most devastated disaster zones. Since its start in 2000 it's helped more than one million people worldwide rebuild their lives, and it now has affiliate ShelterBox operations across Europe, Africa, Americas and Asia. More info at [www.shelterbox.org](http://www.shelterbox.org)