

## Toronto-based aid team still awaiting visas for cyclone-ravaged Myanmar

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TORONTO — A member of a Toronto-based rapid response team says he is frustrated the team has been unable to secure visas to get into cyclone-ravaged Myanmar — and the UN's decision today to suspend aid shipments will affect his group's backup plan.

Rahul Singh with GlobalMedic told The Canadian Press in an interview from Bangkok this morning that it is a frustrating time right now.

Singh says the embassy for Myanmar is closed today for a public holiday in Thailand and he is still hopeful the team will be able to get visas on Monday — even though Myanmar's government has said it doesn't want foreign aid workers entering the country.

GlobalMedic's rapid response team, which left from Toronto on Wednesday, was equipped with five million water purification tablets, 21 water purification units and \$1 million worth of medicine to stave off water-borne diseases.

Singh says the team plans to train aid workers from Myanmar on how to use the water purification equipment in Bangkok and start sending it in with them to Myanmar this weekend, so at least the equipment can still be used to produce clean water.

But he says the UN's decision to suspend aid shipments to Myanmar means the air bridge will be shut down so GlobalMedic will have to get the equipment across the border a little at a time instead of all at once by air.