

Alert notes

Malawi and Mozambique – Cyclone Freddy, 15th March 2023

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Date completed: 16th March 2023

Forum: ACT (Action by Churches Together) Malawi Forum and ACT Mozambique Forum.

Type of emergency: Natural Disaster – Cyclone

Date of emergency (if rapid onset): First Landfall: Mozambique, 24th February 2023; **Second Landfall:** Mozambique: 11th March 2023 and Malawi: 12th March 2023

1. The nature of the emergency

Tropical Cyclone Freddy which is the longest ever recorded cyclone, accompanied by torrential rains, floods and mudslides in Mozambique and southern Malawi has brought devastating effects. The Cyclone has caused severe flooding affecting homes, hampering access and increasing danger of flooding and death. Critical roads, electricity and communication are destroyed in in the most affected areas in Malawi and Mozambique. The floods and increasing water levels due to the rains are causing displacement of people.

In **Mozambique**, Cyclone Freddy made landfall first on 24th February 2023 in Inhambane Province and later made landfall in Zambezia Province, on 11th March 2023. Cyclone Freddy has continued to move over land as a tropical depression, with a localized centre close to the border between Mozambique and the southern tip of Malawi, according to Meteo France. Although the cyclone system has weakened considerably, it is still generating intense rainfall in the interior of Mozambique and southern Malawi, with extreme rainfall forecasted for the days ahead across Zambezia, Sofala and Tete provinces in Mozambique and southern Malawi this is according to the latest Flood Risk Bulletin produced for and with support of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom.

Prior to Cyclone Freddy making landfall on 24th February, most of Southern Mozambique was affected by floods caused by heavy rains in the region. These floods had already impacted more than 43,000 people since 3rd February 2023, particularly in Maputo Province (Source: UNOCHA Flash Update 7).

Freddy's second landfall has brought fierce winds to Zambezia province, as well as heavy rains (above 200mm/24h) to Zambezia, Sofala, Manica, Tete and Niassa provinces. Some of these provinces received as much rain in 24 hours as they would usually experience in one month. Basic services and public infrastructure have also been affected. Meanwhile, the cholera outbreak in Mozambique continues to spread, and the number of confirmed cholera cases has risen to 8,500 as of 12th March 2023. 1

Many private residences, schools and hospitals were affected by strong winds and heavy rains; many roads were also blocked because of fallen trees. More accommodation centers are being established in the province. Electricity and communications are not working. Joint preliminary assessments will tentatively start on 12 March, under the leadership of INGD (the National Disaster Management Authority).

In **Malawi**, from 10th to 14th March 2023, most parts of Southern Malawi were severely hit by heavy persistent rains and strong winds due to the influence of Cyclone Freddy. The Cyclone, that originated in the Indian Ocean, made a landfall in Malawi on 12th March 2023, through the southern tip of Malawi. The heaviest rainfall was registered on Monday, 13th March 2023.

The President of Malawi has declared a State of Disaster in the most affected region (Southern Region). When the cyclone made landfall, hundreds of people lost their lives due to effects of the cyclone when their houses collapsed, and they were buried by landslides (which occurred at night). Many houses were

1 SOUTHERN AFRICA: Tropical Cyclone Freddy, Flash Update No. 7, 14 March 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/southern-africa-tropical-cyclone-freddy-flash-update-no-7-14-march-2023>

submerged/ carried by the flood water. According to Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA). It is reported that at least Eighty-five of those killed died due to landslides in Cilobwe². The disaster caused by the cyclone exacerbates an ongoing cholera outbreak that was declared a public health emergency by government of Malawi on 05th December 2023.

45

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

Scale of Emergency

Cyclone Freddy is a **large-scale emergency** that hit Malawi and Mozambique. Both country governments are calling for international support. The persons affected are mainly poor rural farmers in both countries.

Inaccessibility of most affected areas in Malawi and Mozambique due to damaged roads and bridges is making needs assessment, search and rescue operations difficult. It will therefore take several days after the rains to access the areas and obtain full information on the extent of damage. Information is also being hampered by the lack of electricity resulting from damaged electricity poles and wires. This is affecting internet/network connectivity and subsequent transfer of information. More specific information will be collected by the ACT Partners in Malawi and Mozambique during a planned Rapid Assessment exercise.

Locations most affected by Cyclone Freddy in Malawi and Mozambique:

Malawi: 10 Districts (Blantyre, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, and Zomba Districts) in the Southern Region of Malawi are affected with flooding and landslides.

In **Mozambique**, 9 provinces (Sofala, Manica, Tete, Zambezia, Niassa, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala and Cabo Delgado) have been affected by flooding.

Characteristics:

The Cyclone has been razing buildings, damaging farmland, critical infrastructure (especially roads) and telecommunications and causing severe flooding and landslides and people have been forced from their homes and are displaced in schools and churches. Others are hosted in families. Livelihoods have been lost because the Cyclone has swept away/destroyed most farm crops and farmers were about to harvest their crops. Most farmers have also lost their livestock due to drowning.

In **Mozambique**, following Freddy 's first landfall in Inhambane province and second landfall in Zambezia province, at least 222,000 people are affected—including 20 killed, 24 injured —by heavy rains and floods. More than 45,500 households and 66,500 hectares of agricultural land are affected, according to preliminary data from the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD) of 14 March 2023. Those displaced are currently seeking shelter in camps that have been commissioned.

In Sofala the affected population in Caia District is staying at the railway station with poor conditions; they are being assisted by the host community. The new cargo train line and train passenger service from Mozambique Port (Beira) to Malawi has been disrupted following flooding. It is reported by local sources that parts of the train tracks have been destroyed. It is likely that this disruption will affect the movement of goods from the port of Beira in Mozambique to Malawi as well as exports from Malawi and thus may increase market prices of basic commodities.

² Ibid

³ WHO – Cholera Malawi: [https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-](https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON435#:~:text=Malawi%20is%20experiencing%20a%20widespread,cholera%20in%20the%20country's%20history.)

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In **Malawi**, more than 260 people are dead (this number is expected to increase); more than 71,000 people (13,000 households) have been affected and at least 26,000 people (5,300 households) have been in the hardest-hit districts. Most of Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mulanje and Phalombe districts are under water, search and rescue teams are on the ground rescuing people in these areas. As of 14th March 2023, the districts reported 3,269 households affected and 1,300 households displaced in Nsanje; 4,131 households affected, and 2,100 households displaced in Chikwawa; 3,014 households affected, and 980 households displaced in Mulanje; 2,280 affected and 890 displaced in Phalombe. Those displaced are currently seeking shelter in camps that have been commissioned.

The Ministry of Education suspended classes in the ten at-risk districts from 13 March 2023. It is not clear when classes for students will resume since some schools are being used as accommodation camps. Flood levels remain high in several areas, hampering emergency efforts. Houses of the affected are destroyed due to the intense and heavy rains and the displaced are living in crowded conditions without safe water or food.

At the camps, women are separated from men to ensure issues of protection do not arise. The affected lack basic household items and currently health services access is hampered. There is a high likelihood of an outbreak of water borne diseases, including cholera. Long term consequences include affected livelihoods and lack of incomes and the need to rehabilitate/repair their homes.

The humanitarian situation in Malawi and Mozambique is likely to worsen as persistent rains continue to fall and with the forecast indicating that the situation would continue even beyond 15th March 2023. The full extent of the damage is yet to be assessed and the figures reported in Malawi and Mozambique are expected to increase as remote areas become more accessible and additional information is available. Multi-agency needs assessments are being led by Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) in Malawi where CARD and ELDS (Evangelical Lutheran Development Service) are engaged and by the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD) in Mozambique where DKH and partners in Mozambique are engaged.

3. Local and national capacity

Due to the low economic standing (rural small-scale farmers) of the affected population in Malawi and Mozambique even before Cyclone Freddy made landfall, most people have no ability to cope with the situation that they currently face. Before the cyclone made landfall most of the affected population lacked adequate food, water, and proper sanitation conditions. A substantial number of the affected population in Malawi and Mozambique were also exposed to Cholera before the cyclone made landfall, further weakening their ability to cope with the aftermath of the cyclone.

DKH will support CARD (Malawi), ELDS (Malawi) and national partners in Mozambique to join ongoing multi sectoral Rapid Needs Assessments coordinated by the National Disaster Authorities (DoDMA – Malawi and INGD – Mozambique) and UN Clusters over the next days (20 – 31 March 2023) in Mozambique and Malawi to obtain more accurate information related to the proposed intervention areas.

CARD, ELDS and DKH partners in Mozambique all have ongoing operations and presence in the proposed intervention areas as indicated below:

- CARD (Malawi) will work in Nsanje and Mulanje Districts
- ELDS (Malawi) will work in Chikwawa and Phalombe Districts
- DKH and national partners in Mozambique will work in Zambezia, Tete and Inhambane, Sofala, Gaza and Nampula Provinces

Mozambique:

The Government officials of the National Institute for Disaster Risk Management (INGD) have deployed to the most at-risk provinces. Emergency Operational Centers (COEs) have been activated and provincial humanitarian partners are preparing to provide life-saving assistance in Manica, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia provinces. UN cluster sectoral priority response activities have been identified and humanitarian stocks, such as food, tents, kitchen sets, water purification, and health supplies have been mapped. In Zambezia province, humanitarian teams conducted a rapid evaluation of damages. In Sofala province, heavy rains were also reported in all districts, many of which were already flooded following Freddy first's landfall. In Tete province, heavy rains were reported in Mutarara, affecting road access to the district. Authorities estimate that 55,547 people are at risk in the province.

Malawi:

The national Search and Rescue (S&R) Team has been deployed. This comprises the Malawi Police Service, the Marine Department and Malawi Red Cross Society. The S&R team is currently conducting search and resume operation especially in Nsanje, Bangula, Chikwawa, Mulanje and Phalombe. Government has also deployed personnel and equipment (boats) from the Malawi Defence Force to aid the search and resume operation.

District Councils in collaboration with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) are conducting assessments to establish the extent of the damage. The councils, in collaboration with DODMA and NGOs are setting up camps to accommodate displaced households. In many of these affected areas, schools are being used as camps for the displaced households. Many district councils have not yet sent the required assistance to the areas, as government and NGOs are still mobilizing resources to assist the affected people.

Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) is also organising meetings to give updates nationally and are providing some relief items for use by displaced and affected people living in the camps.

All agencies, local and international, are working in a challenging and complex operating environment, with decreasing financial support despite increasing needs. CARD and ELDS in Malawi as well as DKH and national partners are well positioned in the areas affected by Cyclone Freddy, and all have well trained staff that can work in demanding situations with utmost efficiency and productivity. The requesting agencies have extensive experience in humanitarian response and are active in coordination groups at National level including UN (United Nations) Clusters and emergency forums coordinated by national disaster management authorities (DoDMA-Malawi and INGD – Mozambique).

4. Key needs and gaps

In both countries (Malawi and Mozambique), it is difficult for governments as well as humanitarian agencies to provide current figures on the affected population due to challenges in accessibility of the worst affected areas as well as the fact that the rain has not subsided and that the water levels are rising.

Based on previous experience from responding to Cyclone Idai and similar emergencies and information that is already available, an emergency response is needed immediately. The current and anticipated needs include, but are not limited to:

1. Evacuation Support: There is need of Fuel and vehicles (including boats) to support evacuation work
2. Emergency Shelter: Family Tents, Tarpaulins, Plastic sheeting
3. Food /Cash Assistance
4. Non-Food Items: various kits for example Shelter Kits, Household Utensils, Hygiene Kits
5. WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene): Safe and potable water, chemicals for water treatment, water containers, construction of temporary sanitary structures (latrines and bath shelters), Hygiene Promotion campaigns, rehabilitation of damaged and contaminated water structures
6. Psychosocial support: Provision of Community Based Psychosocial support services to the affected

7. Early Recovery/rebuilding/reconstruction: Provision of agricultural inputs for replanting (Seeds and Tools), reconstruction of shelters and sanitary structures, reconstruction of damaged irrigation schemes
8. Emergency Preparedness: There is a need to reinforce existing preparedness and response capacities at community level and introduce them where they do not exist. DKH has supported CARD – Malawi and CEDES – Mozambique on Preparedness actions including Anticipatory Action for Cyclone Freddy at community level. Both organizations have good experiences from the Anticipatory Action interventions carried out and will use this knowledge to empower other vulnerable communities during sudden onset emergencies.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Regional Appeal covering Malawi and Mozambique (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD)	Malawi: Nsanje, and Mulanje Districts	Food Security; Shelter; WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene); Early Recovery; Emergency Preparedness, Psychosocial Support	Financial Support	USD 650,000
Evangelical Lutheran Development Services	Malawi: Chikwawa and Phalombe Districts	Food Security, Shelter, WASH, Early Recovery, Psychosocial Support	Financial Support	USD 650,000
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH)	Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH) Mozambique: Zambezia, Tete and Inhambane, Sofala, Gaza and Nampula Provinces	Food Security, Shelter, WASH, Early Recovery; Emergency Preparedness, Psychosocial Support	Financial Support	USD 1,700,000
			Total	USD 3,000,000

5. Potential responses

CARD, ELDS and DKH who are the requesting members have experience in responding to large scale emergencies sudden onset such as Cyclone Freddy and have previous experience from similar response with Cyclone Idai among other Cyclones and storms that have affected the two countries over the years.

Requesting members of the appeal require financial support, and they will appreciate Technical Surge support from ACT Alliance members. Any support to be provided to requesting members in Malawi and Mozambique shall be coordinated through the ACT Secretariat.

The financial support projection and expected needs in Section 4 above are based on experience of requesting members while responding to Cyclone Idai and other sudden onset emergencies as well as current information.

The potential response is as indicated in section 4 above and the exact number of beneficiaries for each action will be informed by **[1]** the needs assessments to be concluded in coordination with UN Clusters and emergency forums coordinated by national disaster management authorities (DoDMA-Malawi and INGD – Mozambique) and **[2]** available resources.

Emergency Humanitarian Action will be prioritised over Early Recovery/rebuilding/reconstruction and Emergency Preparedness actions. The proposed intervention period is 18 Months (from March 2023).