

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Tropical Cyclone Freddy weather system has brought devastating rains, floods and mudslides to southern Malawi, killing at least 225 people and displacing 88,000.
- The President of Malawi declared a State of Disaster in the Southern Region of the country on 13 March.
- Search and rescue operations continue to be the priority in Phalombe, Mulanje, Nsanje and Chikwawa districts.
- Humanitarian partners are supporting the Government-led response and are deploying staff and supplies to the affected region.
- Relief efforts are taking place following the intense rains, under Government leadership and coordination, but face access constraints due to damaged roads and bridges, with water levels in several districts continuing to rise.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Following Tropical Cyclone Freddy's second landfall in Mozambique, on 11 March, the weather system moved over land as a tropical depression, bringing torrential rainfall to southern Malawi and causing devastating floods and mudslides.

At least 225 people have lost their lives and 700 are injured, following heavy rains and strong winds attributed to the Freddy weather system since 12 March, according to Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) as of 15 March. At least 85 of those killed died due to mudslides in Cilobwe township in Blantyre district. About 186,000 people have been affected, including 88,000 who are displaced in the hardest-hit districts, according to preliminary reports from DoDMA. These figures are expected to rise in the days ahead as further information becomes available, especially in areas that have been cut off from communications, and the situation evolves.

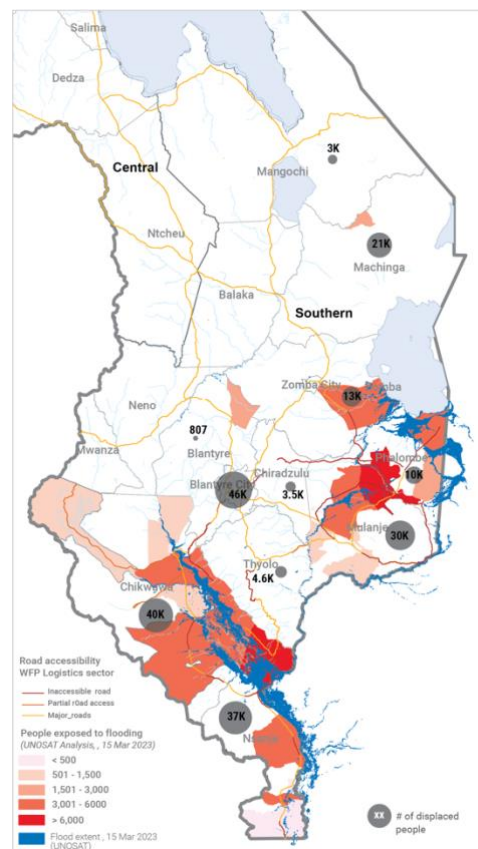


School damaged by Freddy's weather system. Photo: UNICEF

For information on the Tropical Cyclone Freddy weather system's trajectory and impact across Southern Africa, including Malawi, prior to 15 March, see: [OCHA's Southern Africa: Tropical Cyclone Freddy - Flash Update No. 7 \(14 March\)](#)

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Government of Malawi is leading relief efforts, coordinated by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA). Humanitarian partners are co-located in the Government-led Emergency Operations Centre in Blantyre, where the response is being coordinated. Government-led search and rescue operations are underway, including with support from World Food Programme (WFP) and Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS). Over 200 people have been rescued over



the last two days. Operations have, however, been hampered by difficult weather conditions, which have caused at least three rescue boats to capsize.

Humanitarian partners are moving vital supplies—including dignity kits, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, mobile latrines, tarpaulins for shelter, blankets, medical supplies (including for cholera response) and food—to Blantyre. Twenty metric tons of food were delivered to Chikwawa district before roads were rendered impassable by heavy rains. The Bangula Humanitarian Staging Area, a key pre-position hub for southern Malawi, has been cut off by severe flooding. Bangula is in Nsanje, which is among the four hardest-hit districts.

Humanitarians are also working with government counterparts to prevent and respond to protection concerns, including gender-based violence, child protection, and mental health and psychosocial support. In the camps, safe spaces are being identified, and protection specialists are using dignity kit distributions as an entry point for providing adolescent girls and women with referral pathways for information and case management.

Rapid assessments are underway in accessible parts of affected districts, including Blantyre City, led by local authorities with support from humanitarian partners.



WFP staff load super cereal (a maize/soya porridge) to be distributed to people affected by Freddy. Photo: WFP

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Stop Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Malawi: Humanitarian assistance is free. If someone demands that you pay, do something inappropriate, or perform any favour or sexual action in return for assistance, please say no.