
HIGHLIGHTS

- The Government has declared a national emergency and three days of national mourning starting on 20 March.
- The official death toll from Cyclone Idai's landfall has reportedly risen to at least 202 and is expected to increase in the days ahead.
- Flood waters are predicted to rise significantly in the coming days and 350,000 people are at risk.
- The town of Buzi – home to 200,000 people – is at risk of becoming at least partially submerged.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

At least 202 people have died following Cyclone Idai's landfall, according to the President of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi, and the death toll is expected to rise in the days ahead. An estimated 260,000 children have reportedly been affected, according to UNICEF, and are in desperate conditions.

The situation is likely to deteriorate, and the number of people affected is likely to increase, as weather experts predict heavy rainfall in Sofala and Manica provinces from 19 to 21 March. Flood waters may rise up to around eight metres and at least 350,000 people are at risk, according to media reports quoting the President. There are also growing concerns regarding the potential effects of the overflow of the Marowanyati Dam in Zimbabwe on water levels in Mozambique.

On 18 March, Government officials and representatives from the humanitarian community conducted an aerial survey of Buzi area – home to more than 200,000 people - after reports that the Buzi and Pungwe rivers had burst their banks. Thousands of people were reportedly marooned on rooftops and an aerial survey showed that more than 50 kilometers of land in Buzi town had been submerged. The immediate priority is search and rescue for people stranded and isolated by flood waters, with priority being given to trauma victims.

Main roads into and out of Beira remain cut due to flood waters and extensive damage to the road network. Meanwhile, the Beira Central Hospital remains only partially functional due to damage sustained during Cyclone Idai and other clinics in surrounding areas are also reportedly not functioning.

RESPONSE

Search and rescue operations are scaling-up. The Indian Navy and the South African Air Force are supporting Government-led efforts to evacuate survivors from Buzi to Beira. Barges and small boats are being used to gather people at designated points, from where they can be evacuated to accommodation centres in Beira Port. An alert has been sent through the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to mobilise additional search and rescue capacity, particularly teams with floods response experience.

WFP continues to carry-out airlifts of high-energy biscuits and other vital supplies from Beira. An additional four tonnes of biscuits were due to be delivered to Beira on 19 March, in addition to the 1.2 tonnes dispatched on 18 March. Emergency Telecommunication (ETC) partners have deployed ICT equipment and Télécoms Sans Frontière is providing connectivity at Beira airport to support the humanitarian community in the affected areas. The Crisis Connectivity Charter has also been formerly activated for the first time, with Eutelsat and Imarsat providing additional satellite connectivity equipment to support efforts on the ground. Ethanol producer, Greenfuel has deployed earth-moving machinery for the repair of the damaged Tanganda-Chipingo road. The damage was reportedly as result of poor drainage and the company has deployed machinery for clearing the debris before moving to other affected areas, including Chimanimani area.

On 19 March, 7,550 shelter kits and 100 family tents funded by UKaid arrived in Mozambique. The kits can provide emergency shelter for up to 38,000 people. DFID has also provided immediate funds to WFP to provide food for two weeks to 120,000 people. USAID has deployed a disaster expert to assess the damage and identify priority needs, while ECHO has released €2 million to support rapid response in Mozambique.