

Transport and Logistics Cluster Situation Report

#4, 22 March 2023

Malawi Tropical Cyclone Freddy



1. Overview

As of 12 March 2023, the Malawi Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services projected that Tropical Cyclone Freddy would hit Malawi and that impacts of torrential rains and damaging winds were imminent over southern areas. Tropical Cyclone Freddy, after making a landfall on the Mozambique coast on 12 March 2023, reached southern Malawi on 13 March 2023. As of 13 March 2023, the Government of Malawi has declared a state of disaster in Southern Region, noting significant impacts to Blantyre City, Blantyre District, Chiradzulu District, Mulanje District, Mwanza District, Neno District, Nsanje District, Thyolo District, Phalombe District, Zomba City, and Zomba District.

Monday evening 13 March, the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services reported that between 300 – 400mm of rainfall in 48 hours over southern Malawi was expected. Districts have since reported significant damage to infrastructure, hundreds reported dead, and over 114,000 displaced households. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), the country's national disaster management agency, is leading the response efforts.

2. Access Constraints

Road access is severely limited in the Southern Region from the effects of heavy rains and the resulting riverine flooding. Notably, as of 22 March Chikwawa district is accessible via the M1 from Blantyre, but access remains extremely restricted in the southern portion of the district and off the major road. Nsanje district remains inaccessible by road. Access on along secondary roads throughout the Southern Region remains extremely limited, hampering support from within the districts from reaching affected populations. In the Southeast, Chiradzulu district is accessible by road but access remains restricted to small cars given the damage caused by landslides. Phalombe and Mulanje districts have limited road access due to bridge and infrastructure damage. A landslide on the eastern side of the Mulanje Mountains has caused extreme damage, with no access by road available from Muloza (Mulanje district) to the Chiringa Trading Centre (Phalombe district). Major roads from Blantyre have reported flooding, landslides, and damages disrupting humanitarian supplies from reaching affected communities.

Highlighted Access Constraints

- Blantyre - Mulanje: NOT PASSABLE
- Blantyre – Chiradzulu: PASSABLE (no heavy trucks)
- Blantyre – Zomba: PASSABLE
- Zomba – Liwonde: NOT PASSABLE
- Zomba – Phalombe: NOT PASSABLE
- Chiradzulu – Phalombe: NOT PASSABLE
- Mulanje – Phalombe: PASSABLE
- Eastern Mulanje Mountain Range (Chiringa Trading Centre – Muloza): NOT PASSABLE
- Blantyre– Thyolo: PASSABLE

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- Thyolo – Mulanje: PASSABLE
- Blantyre – Chikwawa: PASSABLE
- Chikwawa – Bangula: NOT PASSABLE
- Chikwawa – Mwanza: PASSABLE (4x4)
- Mongochi – Monkey Bay: NOT PASSABLE
- Machinga border area: NOT PASSABLE
- Blantyre City: M1 NOT PASSABLE (Use Chileka Road)
- A physical access constraint map of the southern region has been shared to partners, however the situation remains fluid. Updates are changing regularly – [join the Logistics Cluster Whatapp for updates.](#)

Other major constraints

- Power supply disruptions have been reported throughout the Southern and Eastern region of Malawi. Damage to powerlines has resulted in no power or sporadic power supply in many areas. To protect hydro power stations, Malawian Power Company, Egenco, may turn off facilities to prevent further damages.
- 2022 Tropical Storm Ana significantly damaged power generation leading to nation-wide power rationing (load shedding) that continues to impact Malawi. Damages caused by Tropical Storm Freddy are expected to worsen overall power supply shortages throughout the county.
- Flights have resumed at Chileka International Airport in Blantyre. Commercial air transport is not available to more remote areas of the Southern Region outside of Blantyre. Significant access challenges remain along many major roads throughout the Southern Region, however, the M1 from the Capital City, Lilongwe, to Blantyre is fully operational and passable to all vehicles.

3. Logistics Sectorial Response

The Logistics Cluster, led by the Ministry of Transport and Public Works and Co-led by World Food Programme (WFP), is supporting the Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and partners in the response, by providing logistics sector coordination and information management support as well as by facilitating access to common services. In the immediate aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Freddy the Logistics Cluster is supporting the DoDMA's Interagency Rapid Assessment with staff expertise and logistics support; teams have already been deployed to Nsanje to support with district level assessments.

Transport

- Air transport has been activated to support urgent transportation of life-saving cargo and support search and rescue efforts in locations not accessible by road or river. As of 20 March, Government led air transport services have begun to transport life saving cargo, conduct medical evacuations, and support assessments.
- Road transport support can be provided based on the needs of partners. Transport has been provided for DoDMA dispatches of beans, blankets, and jerry cans to Thyolo, Zomba, Mulanje, Phalombe, Chiradzulu, Chikwawa, Mangochi, Balaka, and Machinga.

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- WFP Fleet 4x4 vehicles are available and standing agreements with commercial transport providers are in place to further augment transport capacity.
- Boats are in Bangula (Nsanje District) at the Humanitarian Staging Area and are actively supporting search and rescue efforts in the area; over 1,600 people have been rescued. In addition to search and rescue, the boats can be used for impact and damage assessments as well as cargo delivery.

Storage

- Storage capacity is available in Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Bangula for partners.
- Mobile Storage Units (MSU) tents are available for deployment and installation based on the needs of partners.
- So far, storage has been provided to DoDMA, Concern Worldwide, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, WHO, and Red Cross.

Contacts

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