



A PIH vehicle in Neno District, Malawi. Credit: Thomas Patterson / PIH

CYCLONE FREDDY DISASTER RESPONSE

RESPONDING TO A CRISIS AND PREPARING FOR THE AFTERMATH

Cyclone Freddy hit southern Malawi on Monday, March 13 after making landfall in Mozambique. The storm has broken world records as one of the strongest and longest sustained tropical storms ever recorded.

As of Monday, March 20, Malawi had reported 476 deaths, 918 people missing, and 707 people injured across the country. In addition, the flooding, mudslides, and strong winds have affected approximately 200,000 households. Malawi's government has declared a "state of disaster" in the southern region of the country, which has sustained the greatest number of casualties and most significant infrastructure damage.

Neno District, home to Abwenzi Pa Za Umoyo (APZU), as Partners In Health is known in Malawi, has reported no casualties. Our staff is safe and all 14 of our health centers are open and fully functional—though three clinics in Dambe, Nsambe, and Matope are accessible only on foot or motorbike due to flooded roadways. The cyclone has compromised infrastructure throughout Malawi, making some roads unnavigable and causing blackouts. APZU is anticipating how this will affect supply chains and is preparing accordingly to avoid interruptions to patient care.

APZU'S proven history in supporting emergency responses in the country and our strong relationship with the Government of Malawi make us uniquely positioned to respond to Cyclone Freddy. As the national emergency response unfolds, APZU will work in coordination with our government partners to identify and respond to urgent needs—while ensuring that our work is integrated into our longer-term commitment to strengthen Malawi's public health sector. Guided by our government partners, APZU's initial priorities will include immediate support to two districts impacted by the storm. Additionally, APZU will lead full assessments to identify urgent needs and lead comprehensive efforts to prepare for the anticipated spread of cholera. APZU is committed to leading a nimble response that enables us to refine our activities based on the evolving situation in Malawi.

Coordinating National Response Efforts

Through the Emergency Operations Center, a unit created to facilitate humanitarian coordination between government, NGOs, and development partners, the scope of APZU's support is being extended to other affected areas beyond Neno District. Two quick reaction teams from Lisungwi Community Hospital and Neno District Hospital have been formed by the Neno District Health Office. The teams are comprised of clinical, nursing, social work, and physical asset management representation. These teams, along with the District Rapid Response Team, have begun facility damage assessments, and we are supporting this work.

We have also made a commitment to support two of the districts most affected by the storm—Chikwawa and Nsanje—with immediate support. These areas are near to Neno, very rural, and challenging to access. APZU currently anticipates supporting these districts with:

- staff, supplies, and transport to provide mobile outreach clinics
- social support for people in camps
- provision of medical supplies for health facilities
- fuel to run the health services and support assessments

Anticipating Cholera's Spread

The cyclone has increased the risk of contracting cholera, exacerbating what has been the country's deadliest outbreak on record. The current outbreak began in March of 2022 in the wake of Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombe. To date, over 50,000 cholera cases have been reported in Malawi—and tragically, over 1,500 people have died. APZU has been deeply involved in cholera education, prevention, and treatment over the last year. The APZU team is poised to respond to a spike in cases following Cyclone Freddy. Severe damage to water sources and families' displacement from their homes will limit access to safe drinking water, with potentially devastating results.

A Global Call to Action

As the APZU team prepares to mobilize for a larger, sustained response—and with a strong likelihood of increasing cholera cases—additional resources are needed to address the health impacts of the cyclone. **PIH urgently needs to raise \$500,000 to provide the strongest possible response to this crisis and to sustain the best possible care for Malawi's patients in the aftermath of the storm.** APZU will maintain a nimble emergency response that enables us to refine our budgets and activities based on the evolving situation. On behalf of the patients and families impacted by this storm, thank you for your consideration of support.

For more information, please contact:

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