

# DEVASTATION AND DISPLACEMENT

**UNPRECEDENTED CYCLONES IN MOZAMBIQUE AND  
ZIMBABWE A SIGN OF WHAT'S TO COME?**

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Cover Photo: A woman at a resettlement site for people displaced by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

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# SUMMARY

In late March 2019, Cyclone Idai made landfall on the central coast of Mozambique. Heavy winds and torrential rains brought devastation across much of central Mozambique, as well as parts of eastern Zimbabwe and southern Malawi. Around 3 million people were affected, including several hundred thousand who were internally displaced. Nearly 2 million acres of crops were destroyed. Just over a month later, in April, Cyclone Kenneth hit northern Mozambique with sustained winds of up to 140 miles per hour, affecting another 300,000 people.

This is the first time since standard weather-related record-keeping began that two major cyclones have hit Mozambique in the same season, and the only known occurrence of a cyclone striking the country's far north. As a country with a long Indian Ocean coast, it is accustomed to tropical storms, but not to cyclones of this intensity. In Zimbabwe, Cyclone Idai's unprecedented heavy rains destroyed crops at a time when many inhabitants already faced hunger due to persistent drought and a deteriorating economy. Climate scientists representing an overwhelming consensus in the scientific community predict that there will be an increase in the proportion of major cyclones with very high winds and rates of rainfall.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, southern African countries bordering the Indian Ocean and those further inland must be prepared for similar future events.

In May and June 2019, a team from Refugees International (RI) traveled to Mozambique and Zimbabwe to assess the ongoing relief, recovery, and disaster-preparedness efforts.

The governments of the two countries and the international humanitarian community deserve credit for mounting robust and well-coordinated emergency relief efforts. Many lives were saved as a result, including through a campaign to stave off a cholera outbreak in Mozambique. Despite the impact of the initial response, however, there are four priority issues that must be addressed: sustaining the emergency response for those still in need, ensuring durable internal resettlement or return for internally displaced people (IDPs), preparing for a future hunger crisis due to massive loss of crops, and promoting disaster risk reduction in all aspects of the response.<sup>2</sup>

First, even as attention shifts to recovery and reconstruction, the two governments and international donors must remember that the emergency is not over for everyone. They must sustain relief efforts where they are needed. This is particularly true for communities in hard-to-reach areas in central Mozambique and those affected by Cyclone Kenneth in the far north of the country. Unfortunately, as of July 2019 the United Nations emergency appeal for Cyclone Idai was only 46 percent funded and that for Cyclone Kenneth was less than 20 percent funded.<sup>3</sup>

More than funding, however, is needed to ensure that aid is effective. The RI team encountered affected communities in rural areas that were only receiving their first food distribution two

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1. "Global Warming and Hurricanes," Revised July 3, 2019, accessed July 31, 2019, <https://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hurricanes/>.

2. In the case of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, the governments and aid agencies refer to resettlement as the permanent relocation of displaced people to new land. Throughout this report, Refugees International uses resettlement to refer to this relocation of people within their own countries to new land identified by the government for long-term re-establishment of their lives. The term does not refer to refugee resettlement—also known as third-country resettlement.

3. "Mozambique Humanitarian Response Plan 2019 (Humanitarian Response Plan) | Financial Tracking Service," accessed August 1, 2019, <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/761/project-grouping/response-type>.



months after Cyclone Idai. There was confusion between international agencies, local implementing partners, and village chiefs about why some villages in a particular district received assistance while others did not. Maintaining senior-level humanitarian leadership and expanding the monitoring of aid delivery will help to ensure that all affected communities receive their intended assistance. This is especially necessary for food distribution. Additionally, in temporary displacement sites, the RI team witnessed a significant lack of measures designed to establish a safe environment for women and girls, such as lighting and gender-specific latrines. This must be addressed.

Second, early recovery efforts for displaced people must be improved. The storms forced around 200,000 people from their homes. For the majority of those displaced, their land is no longer livable. The governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe have either provided or intend to provide new land for those communities to resettle permanently. However, for resettlement to be sustainable, new land must be selected on criteria that reduce risk in the face of future natural hazards such as high winds, flooding, and landslides. Additionally, both governments—with the support of international donors—must make significant and targeted investments in livelihoods and social services, especially for those who have been moved far from their homes.

Both governments must also provide basic home building supplies and materials to those who have been resettled and to those who have been able to return home. Most of the former currently live in tents, while many of the latter lost all their possessions and had their houses partially or totally destroyed. They are vulnerable to the elements right now, let alone in the event of future cyclones.

Third, there is a looming food-security crisis. The two storms destroyed over 2 million acres of crops, primarily across much of central Mozambique, just as the main harvest season was beginning. Much of the destroyed farmland is now covered in mud and sand, making it difficult to prepare for the next main planting season, which usually begins in November. In Zimbabwe, though Cyclone Idai affected a smaller area, the damage exacerbated an ongoing, countrywide food-security crisis. The two governments, donors, and the United Nations must act immediately to stave off an even broader food-security emergency in the months ahead. For example, the World Food Program must be supported to pre-position food stocks in strategic locations, the Food and Agriculture Organization needs more funding to expand the distribution of seeds and tools (including for more flood- and drought-resistant crops), a UN Humanitarian Coordinator should be designated for Zimbabwe, and cash programming should be expanded where feasible. Cash assistance, in particular, can be used in emergencies and to build resilience to mitigate the impact of future shocks.

Fourth, while Cyclones Idai and Kenneth were unprecedented in southern Africa, the region must be prepared for similar storms in the future. It is imperative, therefore, to not only respond to their devastating effects of, but also to move forward with more robust disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts.

Too often, it is those who have done the least to contribute to increased vulnerability due to factors such as climate change who are the most affected by disasters resulting from natural hazards. There is an international responsibility to respond to the impact of such disasters and to help mitigate future risk.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## *Sustain the Emergency Response for Those Still in Need*

- **Donor governments must provide additional funds for emergency relief.**  
In Mozambique, the UN emergency response plans for the response to the two cyclones are significantly underfunded, lacking approximately \$233 million out of the \$385 million required. More support is needed for people still in need of life-saving assistance, especially in the region of northern Mozambique where Cyclone Kenneth struck.
- **The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator should be prepared to extend the designation of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in Mozambique beyond the end of this year.**  
Senior-level humanitarian leadership is needed to maintain a spotlight on the remaining emergency needs and to coordinate ongoing programming in hard-to-reach areas. The UN has confirmed that the HC position in Mozambique will remain until the end of 2019. However, the HC may also need to remain in place into 2020 to mount and coordinate additional relief activities if the crop devastation further exacerbates the food-security situation.
- **The World Food Program (WFP) should deploy additional monitors for food distribution.**  
It must do more to ensure that food is delivered to its intended recipients, including by using more monitors when working with local partners.
- **The UN and its operational partners must expand programming to prevent gender-based violence, especially in transit sites for displaced people.** Donors should provide support for these additional measures—such as improved lighting and gender-specific latrines—to create a more protective environment particularly for women and girls.

## *Support for Internally Displaced People Through Sustainable Resettlement or Return*

- **The governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe should ensure that they only resettle people to safe land where future risk is reduced.** For any future resettlement, as well as for movements that have already taken place, they should work closely with international partners, such as the United Nations Development Program, to ensure that locations are at low risk of experiencing cyclones and other disasters resulting from natural hazards. Methods and tools such as satellite data, map-based tools, and hydrological analysis should be utilized.
- **Once land is selected for resettlement, the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe must ensure that it is prepared in advance.** The land must be cleared and prepared for housing, and access to basic social services, like health care and schools, must be ensured.
- **With the support of aid and development organizations, the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe should, in consultation with affected communities, provide livelihood support.** Most IDPs need income-generating activities to rebuild their lives, especially those who have been resettled far from their home areas. Some who have returned home need assistance as well. Early recovery activities should prioritize job training, income generation, and access to markets. Targeted support should be based on assessments that involve comprehensive communication and consultation with affected communities, especially women.

- **With the support of UN Habitat and other partners, the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe should provide materials for displaced people to rebuild permanent homes and businesses in new resettlement sites, as well as for returnees.** For the cyclone-hit areas to return to a sense of normalcy and for IDPs to remain in permanent resettlement sites, both governments need to provide tools and materials for people to rebuild. The affected populations are resourceful and resilient, but basic support is necessary for them to utilize their capabilities to address their own needs. UN Habitat, which has expertise in the design and construction of climate-resilient housing, should facilitate this effort.

### *Prepare for a Looming Food-Security Crisis*

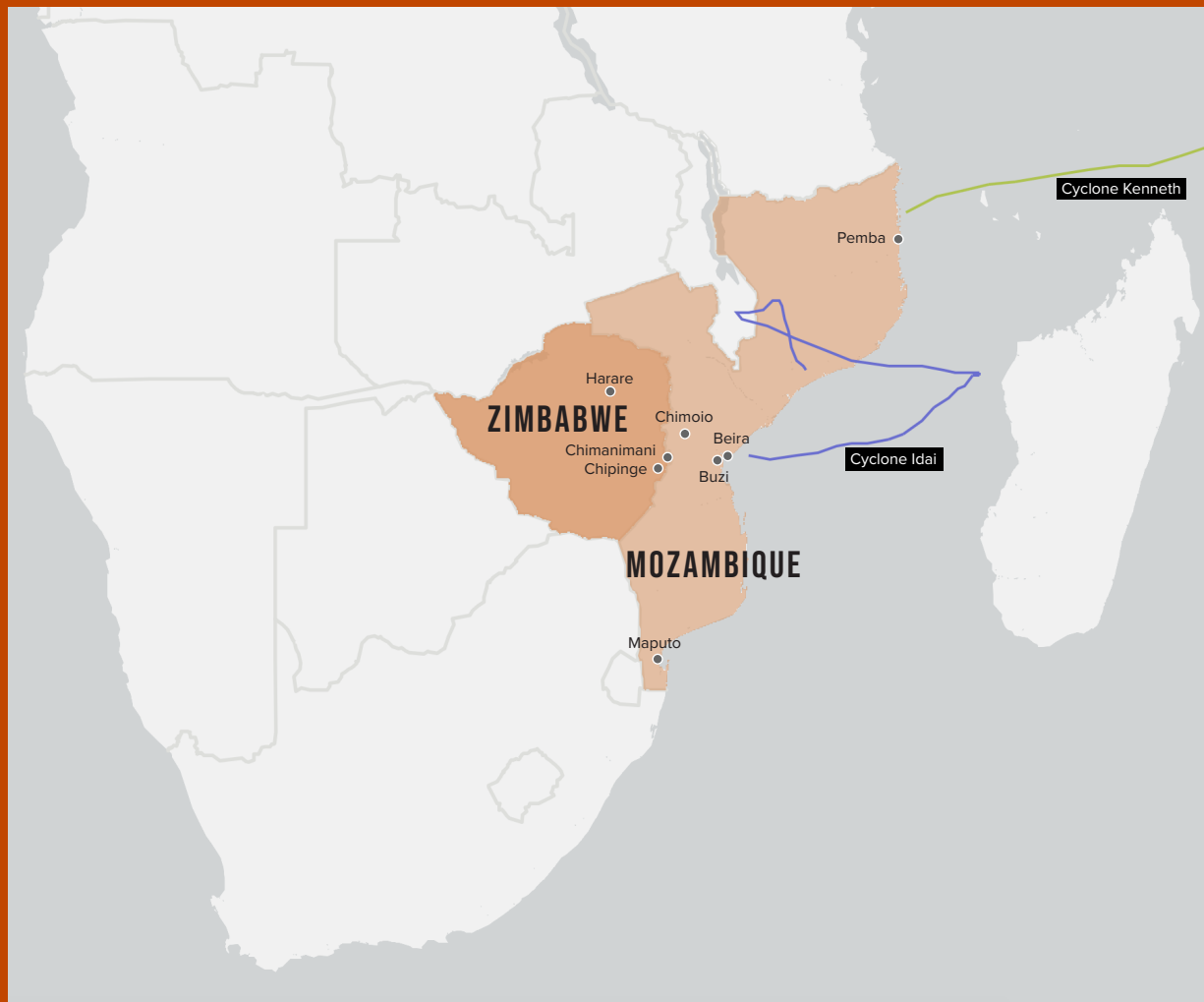
- **In Mozambique, donor governments should increase support for the distribution of seeds and tools to farmers whose crops were destroyed.** Close to half a million farming families were affected by Cyclone Idai. The Food and Agricultural Organization and the government have provided only a fifth of those households with seeds and tools for the next planting season. Additional resources are urgently needed. Through seed distribution, more flood- and drought-resistant crops should be made available to farmers to lessen the impact of future climate shocks.
- **Donor governments must support the World Food Program and others to pre-position food in preparation for a potential widening food crisis across Mozambique and Zimbabwe.** The WFP and others are preparing contingency plans to supply food to communities that were most affected by widespread crop destruction, but substantial donor funding is necessary to implement these plans. Where markets are functioning, the use of cash can also be an effective tool to prevent hunger.
- **The government of Mozambique should allow the use of cash transfers in humanitarian and resilience programming.** Cash programming can be an efficient and effective tool in response to immediate crises, as well as to support the resilience of communities in the face of longer-term climate challenges. Mozambique, however, prohibits relief agencies from making cash transfers to those in need. This restriction must be lifted.
- **The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator should designate a Humanitarian Coordinator for Zimbabwe.** In addition to the situation in areas affected by Cyclone Idai, there is a worsening food-security crisis throughout the country. An HC should be appointed to highlight the needs and to coordinate the humanitarian response across Zimbabwe.

### *Promote Disaster Risk Reduction in All Aspects of the Response*

- **Donor governments and development institutions, like the World Bank, must support the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe to implement more robust DRR programming.** Previous DRR efforts have not matched the needs. Further, in addition to the reconstruction of urban public infrastructure, support for rural communities must be prioritized and communities themselves must be consulted in the development and implementation of projects.

# RESEARCH OVERVIEW

A Refugees International team traveled to Mozambique and Zimbabwe in May and June 2019 to assess the ongoing emergency needs of people affected by the cyclones, to evaluate the transition toward early recovery, and to examine the longer-term food-security outlook. The team chose those two countries because Mozambique was most significantly affected (and hit by back-to-back storms) while Zimbabwe was already in the throes of a food emergency before Cyclone Idai struck. In Mozambique, the team traveled to affected communities in Sofala, Manica, and Cabo Delgado provinces. They interviewed displaced people in temporary-accommodation sites and those who had been resettled, and they also observed aid distributions. In Zimbabwe, the team visited Chipinge and Chimanimani districts. Overall, the team conducted interviews with representatives of more than 25 international humanitarian aid organizations, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental agencies working on the response to the cyclones to understand the overall humanitarian architecture and the challenges in programming.



Source: ESRI.

## BACKGROUND

In March and April 2019, southern Africa was hit by two major tropical storms, back to back. Cyclones Idai and Kenneth devastated huge swaths of land and affected millions of people in poor, under-resourced areas of Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

### Unprecedented Storms

From March 14 to March 15, 2019, Cyclone Idai passed over a remarkably large geographic area. It made landfall in central Mozambique near Beira, a major port city with a population of over half a million people. The heavy rain and severe wind had disastrous effects as the storm moved inland, causing displacement and loss of life across five provinces in Mozambique. Cyclone Idai also brought torrential rain to southern Malawi and flash floods and landslides in eastern Zimbabwe, with hundreds of people in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts killed in just a few hours. Although the initial wind was intense, it was the subsequent rain and flooding that caused widespread damage. Over 3 million people were affected and approximately 2 million acres of crops were destroyed in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Although there is no certainty over exact numbers and likely underreporting, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people were internally displaced and at least 1,000 people died.<sup>4</sup>

Just over a month later, Cyclone Kenneth hit Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado, a part of the country that had never been hit by a cyclone before and now experienced the strongest winds ever recorded in Africa. It destroyed over 30,000 homes and tens of thousands of acres of crops, leaving 374,000 people in need, including 20,000 who were displaced. Emergency response

efforts are still underway but have been complicated by continuing insecurity in the region—an armed Islamist extremist group indiscriminately attacks residents there, making aid provision difficult and displacing tens of thousands of people.

That the two cyclones occurred at that time of year, with this severity, and in these locations was remarkable. It is the only time since weather-related record-keeping began that two cyclones have hit Mozambique in the same season and the only known occurrence of a cyclone striking the country's far north. In Zimbabwe, the heavy rains that accompanied Cyclone Idai were unprecedented. While it is difficult to attribute particular weather events directly to climate change, scientists representing an overwhelming consensus in the scientific community have concluded that cyclone intensity and rainfall rates are expected to increase.<sup>5</sup> Southern Africa must be prepared for more extreme and unusual weather. (See more on page 10).

### Strong Initial Response

The initial response to Cyclone Idai was generally swift and comprehensive, particularly in Mozambique. More than 11 countries sent military units to Beira to conduct search-and-rescue missions and provide logistical support to the aid effort. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) worked in partnership with Mozambique's National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) to set up an operational "command" center at the airport in Beira that directed emergency response efforts in the country. As noted by a UN staff member seasoned in disaster-relief operations, "we included the INGC in everything, all meetings. In fact, they were leading the meetings in most cases. This is one of the better exam-

4. For available facts and figures, see "Cyclones Idai and Kenneth," OCHA, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.unocha.org/southern-and-eastern-africa-rosea/cyclones-idai-and-kenneth>; and "Southern African Tropical Cyclones," USAID, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/cyclone-idai>.

5. "Global Warming and Hurricanes."



ples that I have seen of international and national actors working together.”

In addition to reaching hundreds of thousands of people with food and other lifesaving assistance, a robust and coordinated effort between aid organizations and governments staved off a potentially devastating cholera outbreak in the affected countries.

Indeed, several months after the storms, governments and donors already began shifting their attention away from emergency relief efforts toward longer-term recovery and development. Although this was necessary, some communities—especially those later affected by Cyclone Kenneth and those in hard-to-reach areas in central Mozambique—are still in need of significant life-saving assistance.

## THE CLIMATE CHANGE FACTOR

Global experts representing an overwhelming scientific consensus predict that climate change will impact Africa more severely than any other continent. Disasters resulting from natural hazards—such as flooding, drought, and dangerous winds—cause death and destruction in the immediate term. They are also an enormous threat to the economic growth of African countries and individuals’ livelihoods. The seminal report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2014 addresses many of these issues, and notes that the affects of climate change could “seriously hamper future development” in Africa.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Environment Program explains that, “Given [Africa’s] geographical position, the continent will be particularly vulnerable due to the considerably limited adaptive capacity, and exacerbated by widespread poverty.”<sup>2</sup>

The massive devastation wrought by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth demonstrate this vulnerability. This is the first time since weather-related record-keeping began that Mozambique was hit by two major cyclones in the same season.<sup>3</sup> Cyclone Kenneth, with sustained winds of 140 miles per hour, is the strongest storm ever known to hit Mozambique.<sup>4</sup> While the number of tropical cyclones is not expected to increase (and may decrease), experts predict that there will be a surge in the proportion of major cyclones with very high wind and rates of rainfall.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it was flooding that caused the most damage from Cyclone Idai in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

1. IPCC, 2014: Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, 2015.

2. “Responding to Climate Change,” UN Environment, accessed August 1, 2019, <http://www.unenvironment.org/regions/africa/regional-initiatives/responding-climate-change>.

3. “UN Appeals for International Support as Flood Waters Rise in Wake of Second Mozambique Cyclone,” UN News, April 28, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1037481>.

4. “Cyclone Kenneth: Thousands Evacuated as Mozambique Is Hit with the Strongest Storm in Its History - CNN,” April 25, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/25/africa/cyclone-kenneth-mozambique-evacuation-intl/index.html>.

5. Global Warming and Hurricanes.”

## Challenges for Displaced People

Communities that were displaced face particular challenges. Between 5 and 10 percent of the population affected by the cyclones was displaced. In Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the majority of those who were displaced cannot return to their land because it was destroyed or because the government has deemed that the risk of future climate events makes it inhabitable. Meanwhile, those who were able to return to their land found their homes significantly damaged.

In both countries, people were initially displaced to public buildings, such as schools, or with host communities, before aid organi-

zations helped establish temporary shelters. In Mozambique, the government moved very quickly to resettle people. However, especially during the early stages, this often occurred with almost no warning and with little to no communication with displaced people about their options or how far they were being moved.

In Zimbabwe, many those who were displaced by Cyclone Idai are still living in temporary sites or with host families.<sup>6</sup> Although the government has given assurances that they will be resettled permanently on new land, it is uncertain when that will be done. Both contexts present major challenges to achieving a successful transition to early recovery and long-term development.

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6. "Zimbabwe," DTM, International Organization for Migration, accessed August 1, 2019 <https://www.globaldtm.info/zimbabwe/>.



Devastation outside of a school in Buzi, Mozambique where displaced people initially sought shelter immediately after the cyclone. Families stayed there for many weeks following the storm. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.





Storm devastation in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe where landslides wiped out dozens of houses in this neighborhood. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

While in Zimbabwe, Cyclone Idai affected a relatively smaller number of people compared to that in Mozambique, but it nonetheless struck a country facing widespread food insecurity due to persistent drought and worsening economic situation. The cyclone only exacerbated those challenges.

## Disaster Risk Reduction

Prior to the storms, and with international support, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were moving forward to implement disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures to diminish the impact of natural hazards like cyclones and drought. While there is evidence that these

measures may have played role in mitigating the impact of the two storms, they were inadequate to match the needs. For instance, in Mozambique, the World Bank had provided \$120 million of credit for the construction of new infrastructure in coastal cities, like Beira (which was devastated by Cyclone Idai), followed by another tranche of \$90 million for DRR support earlier this year. In response to Cyclone Idai, the World Bank approved an additional \$545 million for Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe for such projects as rebuilding public infrastructure, re-establishing water supplies, and improving early-warning systems.<sup>7</sup> Reportedly, programming that prioritized smaller villages and rural households proved particularly insufficient during Mozam-

7. "Helping Mozambique Cities Build Resilience to Climate Change," World Bank, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/06/05/helping-mozambique-cities-build-resilience-to-climate-change>; and "World Bank Announces \$90 Million to Strengthen Mozambique's Resilience to Natural Disaster," World Bank, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/03/19/world-bank-announces-90-million-to-strengthen-mozambiques-resilience-to-natural-disaster>.

bique's previous DRR implementation efforts and this should be rectified in future ones.<sup>8</sup>

## ONGOING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

In Zimbabwe, Cyclone Idai caused severe damage in several locations in the east of the country, affecting nearly 300,000 people. Fortunately, the initial emergency phase had stabilized there by May 2019. In Mozambique, which was hit by Cyclone Idai and Cyclone Kenneth, more than 2 million people were affected across a vast geographic area. There, the immediate crisis is still not over for some. While visiting Manica province in western Mozambique, the RI team met with communities that were impacted by Cyclone Idai and were in hard-to-reach areas that were just then receiving their first emergency food distribution. Cut off from road access, community members had had to cross two rivers to reach a delivery point on the main road south of Chimoio town.

Other communities also struggled to access assistance. Through widespread flooding, Cyclone Idai affected an area covering 3,000 square kilometers in central Mozambique. While humanitarian actors made a considerable effort to reach those in need, including by airlift, certain pockets of communities in remote areas have received less attention than others. This is especially true of regions that are hundreds of kilometers from the larger urban centers of Beira and Buzi, where many humanitarian organizations based their operations. Additional humanitarian funding is needed to ensure that all those affected by the cyclones are assisted.

In northern Mozambique, though the impact of Cyclone Kenneth was severe, a relatively small geographic area was affected. However, for the past several years, the region has faced sporadic but brutal violence at the hands of a low-level, ill-defined Islamist extremist insurgent group based in remote areas of Cabo Delgado province. Due to this insecurity, as well as to the poor road and bridge infrastructure, the emergency response has faced significant, expensive logistical challenges.

## Urgent Assistance

In the early stages of the relief operation for Cyclone Kenneth, humanitarian organizations relied on helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to transport personnel and supplies. As of late May 2019, the World Food Program (WFP) had secured a barge and other marine assets to reach affected communities along the northern coast of Mozambique. In late June, the first boat was loaded with food and sailed for the town of Mucojo—one of the areas hardest hit by Cyclone Kenneth. When the RI team visited the region, the emergency operation in the north was in full swing, but additional funds are needed to sustain the effort. According to a UN official in Pemba who met with the team, “We’re running on fumes now.”

Regrettably, the UN emergency appeal for the Cyclone Kenneth response was only about 20 percent funded as of July 2019. The emergency appeal for Cyclone Idai was funded at less than half the total requirement.<sup>9</sup> The lack of resources hinders humanitarian actors’ ability to deliver aid to hard-to-reach areas and to sustain life-saving support for the hundreds of thousands of people who lost everything during the storms. A May 2019 government-led needs assessment estimated that there were 750,000 people in need of

8. Amy Yee, “Mozambique Looks Beyond Cyclone Idai to Better Protection in the Future,” *The New York Times*, May 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/climate/mozambique-climate-change-protection.html>.

9. “Mozambique Humanitarian Response Plan 2019 (Humanitarian Response Plan) | Financial Tracking Service.”





People rushing to cross a river outside Chimoio, Mozambique on their way to pick up the first food distribution more than two months after the cyclone. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.



urgent assistance from Cyclone Idai alone, most of them women and children.<sup>10</sup> Some have been able to rebuild their homes and restart their lives, but many need more time and support.

## Distribution and Coordination

Government and non-governmental entities involved in the emergency response must also take steps to ensure that aid is delivered as efficiently as possible and in line with priority needs. This was apparent as the RI team observed a distribution of hygiene kits in Manica province in central Mozambique, which was particularly affected by Cyclone Idai. Community members told the RI team that they appreciated the kits but that they were hungry—they wondered why they did not receive more food. Others expressed frustration they were not included on government-created lists designating beneficiaries.

Furthermore, several aid officials expressed concerns about proper onsite monitoring of distribution by local implementing organizations or follow-up monitoring to ensure that assistance was delivered as intended. It is unclear how widespread these problems are. During the RI team's visit, aid officials were working to address coordination and monitoring challenges in certain parts of the Mozambique. Such efforts could resolve the issues described and should continue.

For example, OCHA has re-established its presence in Manica province in order to address coordination issues there. This presence should be maintained. Additionally, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) recently announced the designation of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in Mozambique until the end of 2019. This is to be

commended. Even as surge staff draw down, senior-level, countrywide humanitarian coordination will remain essential. Since there is also the risk of a longer-term deterioration in the food-security situation due to the widespread destruction of crops, the ERC should be prepared to extend the designation of the HC into 2020.

Finally, the WFP, with the support of donors, should deploy additional monitors to ensure that its local partners deliver assistance effectively and responsibly. Aid workers told the RI team that villagers in various locations reported that they had not received any assistance although the WFP's partners reported successful deliveries. In addition, individuals have reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse connected with distributions—for example, government officials and local community leaders have allegedly demanded sex in exchange for adding women's names on distribution lists.<sup>11</sup> Representatives of several aid organizations in Mozambique told the RI team that they believe this remains a risk during distributions.

## Protection for Women and Girls

The emergency protection response, especially for women and girls, must be supported by additional resources and programming. Most of the temporary displacement sites the RI team visited in Mozambique and Zimbabwe lacked important features that are proven to help women and girls stay safe, such as lighting and sufficient gender-specific latrines. Several women told the team that they do not always feel safe as a result of living in tents that cannot be locked and lie in close proximity to others. One woman at a

10. "Mozambique Cyclone Idai Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)DNA," UNDP, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/mozambique-cyclone-idai-post-disaster-needs-assessment--pdna-dna.html>.

11. Human Rights Watch, "Mozambique: Cyclone Victims Forced to Trade Sex for Food," Human Rights Watch, April 25, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/25/mozambique-cyclone-victims-forced-trade-sex-food>.



Women and children displaced by Cyclone Idai. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

temporary site in eastern Zimbabwe whose husband had died in during Cyclone Idai said, “My kids live with me but it’s not really safe here in this camp. There’s a lot of noise and drunk men. I’m scared that people will learn I’m a single woman in a tent.”

Ultimately, the emergency response must give way to effective early recovery, reconstruction, and development—an effort that is already under way. In the meantime, those still in need of emergency relief must not be forgotten.

## **SUPPORT FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE RESETTLEMENT OR RETURN**

Those displaced by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth require particular support and investment to rebuild and to restart their lives. Most are from urban and coastal-urban areas. In Mozambique, while the total number of displaced is not clear, around 150,000 of those who fled their homes ended up in temporary camps. About half of them have since been resettled by the government to new land while others have returned home to rebuild or are living with host families. In Zimbabwe, around 50,000 people were displaced and most of them remain either in temporary



camps or are living in host communities. Challenges abound in both countries to ensure that support for internal resettlement or return is effective and sustainable.

## Identifying Land for Resettlement

It is commendable that the government of Mozambique has offered small parcels of land on which to permanently resettle those displaced people who will not be able to return home. The government of Zimbabwe also intends to offer displaced people land where they can permanently resettle but has yet to identify sites for this. The new land is meant to be less prone to flooding and other risks in order to prevent future displacement from storms. However, several humanitarian officials with whom the RI team talked in Mozambique were not confident that the government had identified resettlement sites based on such criteria. One senior humanitarian official said, “I have no idea how the government chooses resettlement sites. It seems as though it is just based on what land is available.”

## The Process of Relocation and Resettlement in Mozambique

In the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Idai, survivors in Mozambique sought shelter in schools and other local community buildings. Eager to reopen schools for classes and also for voter registration ahead of elections in October 2019, the government moved quickly to relocate those people to other areas. It first moved people into temporary transit sites and then to permanent resettlement areas. Although the government had a justified interest in, and a right to, return public buildings to their normal use, it did not need to do so hastily. The speed at which the IDPs were relocated and the process by which they were moved jeopardize the sustainability of the resettlement and the safety of at-risk populations.

Some UN agencies and NGOs chose not to assist in what they considered premature resettlement because they did not want to take part in a process that was rushed. They also raised some protection and sustainability concerns. Others did participate with the intention of limiting harm in what they saw as a done deal. A senior aid official explained to the RI team, “The Mozambican government was going to quickly resettle people whether we liked it or not. Even though we might not have agreed with the speed at which they did it, we decided that it would be better to try and ensure protection considerations were included rather than not to take part at all. In the end we wanted to have some influence.”

The RI team met with IDPs who had been in resettlement sites for more than two months and some who had just arrived there only days earlier. It was clear from field visits throughout the affected provinces that there is a high level of disparity in services and support. In some areas, each displaced family had a tent, was distributed food every two weeks, and said it felt relatively secure. In other sites, IDPs were dropped in areas that they were not familiar with, where they did not feel safe, and where they received limited food and materials for shelter. In almost all sites, IDPs said they were concerned about access to schools, hospitals, and job opportunities. All were living in temporary tents.

## Lessons Learned for Future Resettlement in Mozambique and Zimbabwe

At least four elements must be present for resettlement to be effective and enduring. First, criteria for identifying relocation sites must include ease of access to job opportunities and social services, and whether the land is prone to future disasters resulting from natural hazards, like flooding. For the latter, satellite data, map-based tools, and hydrological surveys must be used. Second, IDPs must be meaningfully involved in decisions about potential resettlement sites, including through





Displaced women clear land and try to ward off snakes at a resettlement site in Savane, Mozambique. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.



go-and-see visits. Third, IDPs need to regularly be provided information about the timing and process of relocations and the assistance they will receive upon relocation. Finally, sites need to be prepared prior to relocation, including by clearing land, setting up latrines, and installing lights.<sup>12</sup>

The RI team saw the importance of these elements as it conducted site visits throughout central Mozambique, where some resettlement efforts incorporated them but others did not. Interviews with IDPs revealed that the extent to which the government took these steps varied drastically across communities.

In central Mozambique the government has essentially completed the relocation of displaced people from accommodation centers to permanent sites. However, in northern Mozambique some resettlement is still under way.<sup>13</sup> In Zimbabwe, the resettlement process has yet to begin for most people due to delays in decision-making on the identification of new land. This is largely due to disagreements between local political leaders.

While it takes time to adequately prepare resettlement sites and include IDPs in the process of decision-making, the principles highlighted by the humanitarian community during resettlement in central Mozambique should be applied to northern Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The way in which resettlement is implemented can have significant implications on the success of early recovery efforts.

## Post-disaster Needs Assessment in Mozambique

Just two months after Cyclone Idai made landfall and only one month after Cyclone

Kenneth, the government of Mozambique held a reconstruction and recovery pledging conference. This brought development partners and donors to Beira to focus attention on addressing longer-term needs. Of the \$3.2 billion sought by the government, donors pledged \$1.2 billion.

Turning to recovery and reconstruction is essential. It is also understandable that the government may have hoped to take advantage of donor interest and international media coverage, which can quickly wane following an initial emergency. However, the conference was held before the government could conduct an adequate evaluation of the longer-term needs of affected communities—many of which still had immediate humanitarian needs—and develop a sustainable plan accordingly. Working under the leadership of the government, international development actors (including the World Bank, the UN Development Program, and the European Commission) developed a post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) ahead of the conference. However, it was done more quickly than normal, and it appears that affected communities were not consulted—including those that were displaced.

This was a missed opportunity that is likely to impact the success of the recovery and development efforts. Several donor and aid officials acknowledged to the RI team that the conference happened prematurely and that the government's failure to develop a sustainable plan likely contributed to the relatively low pledging amount.

Communication with affected communities is critical to designing such lasting programs that help people rebuild their lives. It must be prioritized in the upcoming resettlement processes in northern Mozambique and Zimba-

12. For more on planned relocations, see "Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation," Brookings Institution, Georgetown University, and UNHCR, October 7, 2015, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GUIDANCE\\_PLANNED-RELOCATION\\_14-OCT-2015.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GUIDANCE_PLANNED-RELOCATION_14-OCT-2015.pdf).

13. "Mozambique," DTM, International Organization for Migration, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.globaldtm.info/mozambique/>.





Community leaders in Mozambique are trying to rebuild after the storm. Photos by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

bwe as well as in the early recovery initiatives in all areas affected by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth.

Additionally, for those displaced people who were hastily resettled to new land, particularly in central Mozambique, every effort should be made to verify that they are on safe land that reduces risk in the event of future cyclones. To achieve this, the government should engage support from the United Nations Development Program and other climate adaptation specialists to assess the land appropriately for current and future resettlements.

## Economic and Job Support

In addition to living on safe land, IDPs with whom the RI team spoke in central Mozambique stressed that targeted economic livelihood support (i.e. income-generating activities, job opportunities, and training) is crucial for the long-term sustainability of their communities. This was a priority for people living far away from their original homes and

for those who had been resettled nearer to home. However, it is particularly important for the former, who might find themselves in new environments where their trades and skills are no longer relevant.

The RI team spoke to a man in Mandruz, Mozambique who had previously lived on the coast and worked as a fisherman and had been resettled inland two months earlier. He remarked, “It is safe and calm here, but I have absolutely nothing to do. I can’t fish, but it is all that I know. There is not enough food, and I don’t have any way to take care of my family, so how long can I stay here if I can’t make any money?”

As well as taking into account the skills of individuals, support must also promote gender inclusion, with targeted support for women. One donor representative said, “As part of early recovery, I am already concerned that livelihoods are focusing on male heads of households. There needs to be a gender balance in livelihoods programming.”



Even for IDPs in Zimbabwe who have not yet been permanently resettled, getting back to work is one of their greatest concerns. Many people in the hardest-hit areas of the country lost their businesses, work equipment, and possessions, rendering them unable to restart their jobs. An entrepreneur in Chipinge told the RI team that he had a photography business and a music business before Cyclone Idai, but that all of his equipment had been destroyed. He said that he had no capital to reinvest in the businesses and needed government or international agency support to get back on his feet.

## Building Materials

Early recovery also requires providing materials to displaced people to rebuild their communities. In central Mozambique, it is often difficult to distinguish between permanent resettlement sites and transit camps. Both consist of plots of land with tents for families, tents for community activities, and some latrines. The PDNA includes plans for general reconstruction, particularly in Beira, but it is unclear how the government intends to build structures in resettlement sites where people can live in the long term. As an IDP in Sofala province stated, “This is a tent, it is not a house. It will last what, a couple of months?”



A local man paid to make bricks for reconstruction efforts in Mozambique. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

A UN official told the RI team, “We don’t see any plan [from the government] other than plots.”

Likewise, the small percentage of IDPs who have been able to return to their homes in Mozambique and Zimbabwe need government, UN, and NGO support to rebuild. All of the affected people with whom the RI team spoke remarked that it is almost impossible for them to rebuild their homes without being provided cash, tools, or construction materials. A man in Chipinge, Zimbabwe who is currently living with a host family in a neighboring village explained, “My house currently has two walls and part of the roof. I want to go home, and I can’t rely on the kindness of others for too long. But I need some materials. If I had basic building materials and some tools, I could fix my own house and move back home.”

There is also a need to help communities rebuild in a way that limits risk in the face of future climate disasters. UN Habitat, in particular, has expertise in the design and construction of climate-resilient housing and should be engaged in this effort, with support from donor governments.<sup>14</sup> In addition to large buildings and infrastructure to withstand strong winds and heavy rain, individual homes must also be prioritized in rebuilding.

## LOOMING FOOD CRISIS

In addition to targeted support for people who were displaced, Mozambique and Zimbabwe face a massive challenge in the coming months. While most of those affected by the storms were not forced to flee their homes, a tremendous amount of productive farmland was destroyed, particularly throughout much of central Mozambique. “There

is a looming food-security crisis that will hit people in the teeth,” a senior UN official in Mozambique told the RI team.

Central and northern Mozambique have one main harvest season per year, which accounts for 80 to 90 percent of annual production. That season typically begins in March or April. For households dependent on agriculture, stocks from that harvest typically carry families through until the following year. Cyclone Idai struck just at the beginning of the main harvest season, wiping out 1.8 million acres of crops across central Mozambique, the breadbasket of the country. Cyclone Kenneth followed, destroying even more crops in the far north of the country.

The storms, combined with ongoing drought in parts of southern Mozambique, resulted in an overall loss of around 30 percent of annual national maize production, compared to the previous two years. The loss of the main harvest will force many communities to depend on food assistance in the coming months to survive a lean season that will start earlier and last longer than normal. One farmer near Chimoio told the RI team, “Before the cyclone we had drought. Now we don’t know if we will have enough food before the next harvest.”

In Zimbabwe, where Cyclone Idai caused destructive flooding and landslides, the size of productive acreage that was destroyed is fortunately far smaller than in Mozambique. However, the storm occurred while the country was already experiencing widespread food insecurity due to persistent drought and severe economic challenges. The damage from Cyclone Idai only exacerbated a worsening situation.

Even after the worst impacts of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth are managed, the government, the UN, and donors will need to take action

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14. Supporting Safer Housing Reconstruction After Disasters: Planning and Implementing Technical Assistance at Scale, UN Habitat/AXA, May 2019.





A severe landslide devastates a community in Chipinge, Zimbabwe after Cyclone Idai. Photo by Devon Cone, Refugees International.

to prevent and possibly respond to another such emergency with a regional dimension.

## Impact on Agriculture in Mozambique

The government of Mozambique estimates that close to 500,000 farming families were affected by the two storms. Due to extensive flooding, communities not only lost their food for the current season but will find it difficult to prepare their land for the next planting season. In many areas, the flooding set down a layer of mud and sand on top of productive soil.

A woman from west-central Mozambique explained, “My husband and I both used to farm to feed our children. We lost all our crops and we were given seeds, but the timing is not right. We tried to replant a little bit, so we will see.”

According to the Famine Early Warning Network (FEWSNET), households in some of the hardest-hit areas were likely to exhaust their food stocks by September 2019.<sup>15</sup> These areas include Buzi and Nhamatanda districts in east-central Mozambique, with a combined population of around half a million people. There, Cyclone Idai affected 90 percent of households and destroyed 75 percent of the planted crops.<sup>16</sup>

15. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network is a leading provider of early warning and analysis on food insecurity. Created by USAID in 1985 to help decision-makers plan for humanitarian crises, FEWSNET provides evidence-based analysis on 28 countries. Implementing team members include five US government agencies and two private contractors.” See <http://fewsn.net/about-us>

16. “Mozambique | Famine Early Warning Systems Network,” accessed August 1, 2019, <http://fewsn.net/southern-africa/mozam->

Whether there is a major food crisis that lasts beyond the next harvest season will depend on whether people have the proper tools to prepare their land, the time to do so, and access to enough seeds, let alone whether the rains are strong. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is currently working with the government of Mozambique and other partners to distribute seeds and tools to affected families. For example, it is delivering hoes and machetes to help farmers prepare flood-damaged land and implementing an e-voucher program to enable them to purchase their preferred seeds and tools. The assistance, however, is far from meeting the level of need.

The FAO and others have reportedly reached only close to 100,000 of the affected households with seeds and tools.<sup>17</sup> The organization is appealing for additional funds to carry out its work. “If Mozambique’s farmers are not able to take advantage of the upcoming secondary and primary growing seasons, then we will have a long-term food security crisis on our hands,” the FAO’s country representative, Olman Serrano, told the press in May 2019.<sup>18</sup>

As part of the DRR efforts, any seed distribution should involve the introduction of flood- and drought-resistant crops to rural farmers. Farmers in Mozambique generally plant seeds that they saved from the previous years’ crop that perform well when rain and other weather patterns are normal.<sup>19</sup> However, there are seeds that are more resilient in the face of weather hazards that should be provided to farmers as part of any agricultural distribution program.

In the meantime, without food stocks, families must purchase food in markets. Mozam-

bique’s market system has generally returned to normal and traders are moving surplus grains from unaffected parts of the country to regions where supplies are low. However, the overall crop reduction has driven prices higher than normal. In order to have enough food, many affected families resort to coping mechanisms that can create additional risks. For example, families reduce the frequency of meals and adults tend to limit the size of their meals to leave enough food for their children. In addition, individuals work odd jobs, produce and sell charcoal, and sell remaining livestock to be able to afford market prices.

## Ongoing Hunger Crisis in Zimbabwe

There are currently 5.6 million Zimbabweans in need of food assistance, including the 270,000 people affected by Cyclone Idai. The number may increase. In one area of severe flooding in the east, a rising river carried massive boulders right through a village. One farmer in the area told the RI team, “We have no more farmland. Instead there are only stones.”

The 2018/2019 maize harvests countrywide are 40 percent below average production and a deteriorating economic situation is compounding the impact of the food shortage. Inflation is currently at around 100 percent and in May 2019 the government decided to remove fuel subsidies, further elevating the costs of basic commodities.

According to a UN official interviewed by the RI team, “Probably half the people in this country will be in need of assistance by the end of the year.” In fact, that may already be the case.<sup>20</sup> FEWSNET predicts that up to sev-

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bique.

17. Ibid.

18. “USD 10 Million from the World Bank for FAO-Led Agricultural Recovery Effort in Mozambique,” accessed August 1, 2019, <http://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/1193769/>.

19. “Protecting Small Farms in Mozambique From Drought,” UC Davis, April 22, 2019, <https://www.ucdavis.edu/food/news/protecting-small-farms-in-mozambique-from-drought>.

20. “More Than Half of Zimbabwe’s People Face Hunger, Report Says,” Bloomberg, July 16, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com>.



en districts, including Chipinge that was hit by Cyclone Idai, could be classified in the “Emergency” acute food-insecurity phase. This is only one phase below “Famine.”<sup>21</sup>

## Staving off a Worsening Food Crisis in Mozambique and Zimbabwe

Senior UN officials are well aware of the negative prognosis. While visiting Mozambique in June 2019, Ursula Mueller, the assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, stated, “I am deeply concerned for the months ahead, as food insecurity is expected to rise due to the extensive damage to crops and livelihoods.”<sup>22</sup> In Zimbabwe, more than one aid official told the RI team there could be mass movements to South Africa if the food situation does not improve.

Awareness of a looming crisis, however, does not guarantee action. UN agencies and other relief organizations need substantial support from donors to carry out prevention and response plans. The tepid response from donors in the immediate aftermath of the cyclones does not bode well for the likelihood of a robust crisis-prevention effort.

The risk of widespread hunger in Mozambique and Zimbabwe is particularly high given that persistent drought has depleted food stocks across the region. Both countries are reportedly seeking to import wheat and maize from countries such as Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

However, this will take time. Moreover, while Mozambique is in a relatively better financial situation to purchase grain imports, Zimbabwe’s economy is in free fall.

Hunger and famine can be prevented when the response is early and robust. In Somalia, a significant increase in cash transfers helped stave off a potential famine in 2017. Cash is important for emergency response efforts and also to support longer-term resilience in the face of climate shocks where markets allow. Several of the programs in Somalia, for example, were implemented in multi-year phases.<sup>24</sup> Cash can allow people to make their own choices about how best to cope with slow- or sudden-onset climate events and is useful in response and prevention.

Unfortunately, in Mozambique, the government does not allow the distribution of cash by aid and development organizations. In Zimbabwe, cash is used, but this is less effective when there is a shortage of food in the markets. Further, in some cyclone-hit areas, some of the markets have not yet restarted, rendering people dependent on in-kind distributions.

The WFP and others are preparing contingency plans to supply food to communities that are likely to be most in need, but substantial donor funding is necessary to implement these plans. In addition, the UN ERC should designate a Humanitarian Coordinator for Zimbabwe. While the Humanitarian Cluster system was activated to help coordinate the cyclone response in eastern Zimbabwe, no

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com/news/articles/2019-07-16/more-than-half-of-zimbabwe-s-people-face-hunger-report-says.

21. FEWSNET uses Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), a five-phase scale that is the international standard for describing the severity of food emergencies. For details on Zimbabwe, see <http://fewsn.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/food-security-outlook/june-2019>

22. “Deputy Humanitarian Chief Concludes Visit to Countries Affected by Cyclone Idai and Calls for Increased Support to Tackle the Effects of Climate Change - Mozambique,” ReliefWeb, June 12, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/deputy-humanitarian-chief-concludes-visit-countries-affected-cyclone-idai-and>.

23. For details, see “Zimbabwe Plans Big corn Imports After Bad Weather Devastates Harvest,” Bloomberg, June 6, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-06/zimbabwe-plans-corn-tender-signaling-biggest-imports-in-3-years>; and Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security & Vulnerability in Southern Africa, Southern African Development Community, July 2019.

24. For example, see “Cash Transfer and Community Resilience Programming in South Central Somalia,” accessed August 1, 2019, <http://www.cashlearning.org/news-and-events/news-and-events/post/230-cash-transfer-and-community-resilience-programming-in-south-central-somalia>.

HC was designated to manage relief efforts throughout the country. Given the likelihood of a deterioration of the situation, an HC should be designated to galvanize resources, coordinate an expanded humanitarian response, and liaise with senior government officials.

human-made factors such as climate change often bear the greatest impacts. The international community needs to step up and help countries affected by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth continue to respond, begin to rebuild, and prepare for future shocks.

## CONCLUSION

While the humanitarian responses to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth were quick and relatively well coordinated for disasters of their scale, it is clear that the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe, together with international and local organizations, need to continue to provide assistance to affected communities. As the response transitions to early recovery and reconstruction efforts, it needs to include emergency support for particularly vulnerable people, livelihoods and reconstruction support for everyone affected, and an emphasis on preparing for food insecurity into 2020.

Additionally, the response must also involve significant attention to DRR. Whether in selecting new land for displaced people, providing materials for reconstruction, distributing seeds, or providing cash assistance, programming must be aimed at helping communities to mitigate the potential devastation of future natural hazards. DRR is about more than large-scale infrastructure projects and affected communities must be consulted throughout the process.

Long-term climatic patterns strongly indicate the likelihood of cyclones of increased intensity in coastal regions of Africa and elsewhere in the world. This includes regions such as the ones impacted by Cyclone's Idai and Kenneth that are already beleaguered by frequent drought and widespread underdevelopment. Unfortunately, people in areas of the world that have contributed the least to

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# ABOUT REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

Refugees International advocates for lifesaving assistance and protection for displaced people and promotes solutions to displacement crises around the world. We are an independent organization and do not accept any government or UN funding.



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