

MOZAMBIQUE SITUATION POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE

10 January 2024



Recent arrivals at a collective centre in Nsanje District of Malawi. Due to overcrowding, many people are sheltering in open areas.

@UNHCR/ Gloria Nyang'iye

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The situation in Mozambique remains tense** amidst an ongoing political crisis following October's contested election results. While there has been a marked reduction in the violence and unrest during the last week of December, the situation remains unpredictable.
- On 4 January, UNHCR conducted a joint mission with Mozambique's National Institute of Refugee Assistance (INAR) to **the Maratane refugee settlement in Nampula province, where over 1,000 refugees and asylum seekers previously living in nearby Nampula city have sought refuge**. In consultation with refugee leaders, UNHCR is working with partners provide to assistance, while screening and registration is going.
- **Humanitarian access** to the southern districts of Cabo Delgado resumed following a temporary suspension in operations at the end of December due to escalating violence and insecurity. However, the emergency response in the northern districts of Nampula province remains on hold due to insecurity.
- There are **concerns around the potential impact of the evolving Tropical Storm Dikeledi**, which is forecast to reach cyclone status near eastern Madagascar on 11 January and could make landfall across multiple provinces of Mozambique from 12 January.
- **As of 9 January, host governments, with support from UNHCR, have verified over 5,000 new arrivals from Mozambique to Malawi and Eswatini.** As of 9 January, UNHCR and the Malawi Department of Refugees have completed the registration of 4,216 individuals, the vast majority of whom arrived in the Nsanje District between 23-24 December. Also, as of 9 January, at least 1,064 individuals have sought safety in Eswatini. While arrivals to Malawi and Eswatini continue to be reported, the scale of daily cross-border movements appears to have declined.

Country	Total number of new arrivals from Mozambique	Number of new arrivals since the last update (31 December)
Malawi	4,216	+2,407*
Eswatini	1,064	+114
Lesotho	3	+3
TOTAL	5,283	+2,524

*(NB that registration of those who arrived between 23-24 December was only partially completed as of 31 December; most of the new arrivals to Malawi arrived between the 23-24 December)

- UNHCR is working with the governments of Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe on contingency plans and preparedness together with partners.

MOZAMBIQUE

Security and Political Developments

- On 9 January, **opposition leader and presidential candidate Venâncio Mondlane returned to Mozambique** after two and a half months abroad. Upon arriving in Maputo, Mondlane declared his readiness to engage in dialogue over the contested election results. In an address to journalists at Maputo International Airport, Mondlane expressed his commitment to defending his supporters, who he claimed were being subjected to violence and persecution. Under heavy security, Mondlane and his supporters subsequently left the airport. They made their way to the centre of Maputo, where he addressed a large crowd of supporters and swore a symbolic oath of office, reaffirming his claim to have won October's election.
- As of 10 January, **the overall security situation in Mozambique has remained relatively calm** since Mondlane's return. According to media reports, the most notable security incident occurred during Mondlane's address to supporters in the centre of Maputo, which was ultimately dispersed by police who deployed tear gas and gunfire, causing panic and reportedly leading to three casualties. Following this confrontation, the crowd size reduced significantly over the course of the afternoon, and no further disturbances were reported. No significant unrest or violence was reported in other large cities, including Nampula and Pemba in the country's north.
- **The risk of political violence and more widespread unrest- including the kind of looting and vandalism witnessed during the last week of December- is high**, particularly in the lead-up to the 15 January presidential inauguration. The situation in northern Mozambique, including in Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, where a convergence of crises could lead to more security issues and deepen the humanitarian crisis.

Needs & Response

- **Over 1,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Nampula City relocated to the Maratane settlement following the outbreak of violence in the city on 23 December.** This violence resulted in the destruction and looting of many shops and businesses in the city, including those owned by refugees and asylum seekers.
- Following an improvement in the situation, **UNHCR and INAR conducted a joint mission to the Maratane settlement in Nampula to assess the situation of these new arrivals on 4 January.** Following this, UNHCR and INAR also met with refugee leaders to discuss tangible steps to ensure the well-being and security of the new refugees where; as a first step, it was agreed to launch an immediate registration exercise to better understand the situation of new arrivals and ensure those with specific needs receive the assistance they require.
- UNHCR is exploring possibilities to provide all newly arrived families in Maratane with Core Relief Items (CRIs). With the violence and unrest resulting in the loss of many families' livelihoods, UNHCR and partners will also prioritize immediate support to help people recover and reestablish their self-reliance, including through entrepreneurial support, the launch of new livelihood initiatives and the provision of psychosocial support.

Cyclone Chido Impact & Response

- Despite the ongoing efforts of humanitarian partners in coordination with the Government of Mozambique to reach populations affected by Cyclone Chido, **the sheer scale of destruction wrought by the cyclone and the challenging operating environment are hampering efforts to reach those in need.** According to the Mozambique National Institute for Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (INGD), as of 3 January, only 18.3 per cent of shelter needs, 7.8 per cent of WASH needs, and 46 per cent of food needs among the over 272,000 people estimated to have been affected by Cyclone Chido in Cabo Delgado province have so far been met.
- Limited humanitarian access to some areas remains a primary barrier to reaching communities affected by the cyclone. Since 26 December, **the Government of Mozambique has restricted access to three cyclone-affected districts in northern Nampula province, citing security reasons.**
- Following a 72-hour suspension of emergency humanitarian operations in southern districts of Cabo Delgado between 29 and 31 December due to insecurity, **the Government authorized the resumption of operations on 1 January.** However, the humanitarian response in these districts continues to be disrupted by incidences of violence and looting, with reports of growing unrest among the population due to delays in aid delivery. On 7 January, a truck carrying humanitarian food supplies was vandalized and looted during a distribution- the third food distribution to have been targeted in recent weeks- while there was also a recent incident involving the distribution of shelter items.
- **Despite these challenges, UNHCR, in coordination with partners, continues to provide assistance to people affected where possible.** UNHCR has distributed at least 826 Core Relief Item (CRI) kits, benefitting over 4,000 individuals. UNHCR is currently mobilizing additional resources to further scale-up the response, which should allow for the distribution of a further 650 CRI kits over the coming period, benefitting approximately 3,250 people.
- **UNHCR has also intensified protection monitoring efforts in Cabo Delgado,** mobilizing trained protection focal points to assess the conditions of IDPs in affected areas. This monitoring has highlighted the sheer scale of destruction wrought by the cyclone, leaving IDP families without shelters or sufficient access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities. The loss of livelihoods, particularly in agriculture, has compounded the challenge IDPs face in rebuilding their lives.

Coordination & Partnerships

- The overall humanitarian response in the country continues to be coordinated under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster system framework. At the local level, Area Humanitarian Country Teams (AHCTs) are coordinating the response, ensuring the engagement of key local responders. For the refugee response in Nampula and Maputo, coordination is led by the government under the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), with support from UNHCR.
- Between 7-8 January, UNHCR joined an **inter-agency mission to Chiure District** in Cabo Delgado. With emergency operations in Chiure previously suspended due to a security incident, the objective of this mission was to reestablish acceptance through engagement with the community ahead of a planned resumption of aid response over the coming week.
- UNHCR and partners attended a government-led meeting on the '*reordamento*' plan to support the reconstruction of cyclone-affected areas while also addressing longer-term challenges linked to urbanization. The draft plan focuses on ambitious upgrades to infrastructure in Cabo Delgado. UNHCR and partners continue to emphasize the need for further consultation to ensure community buy-in.

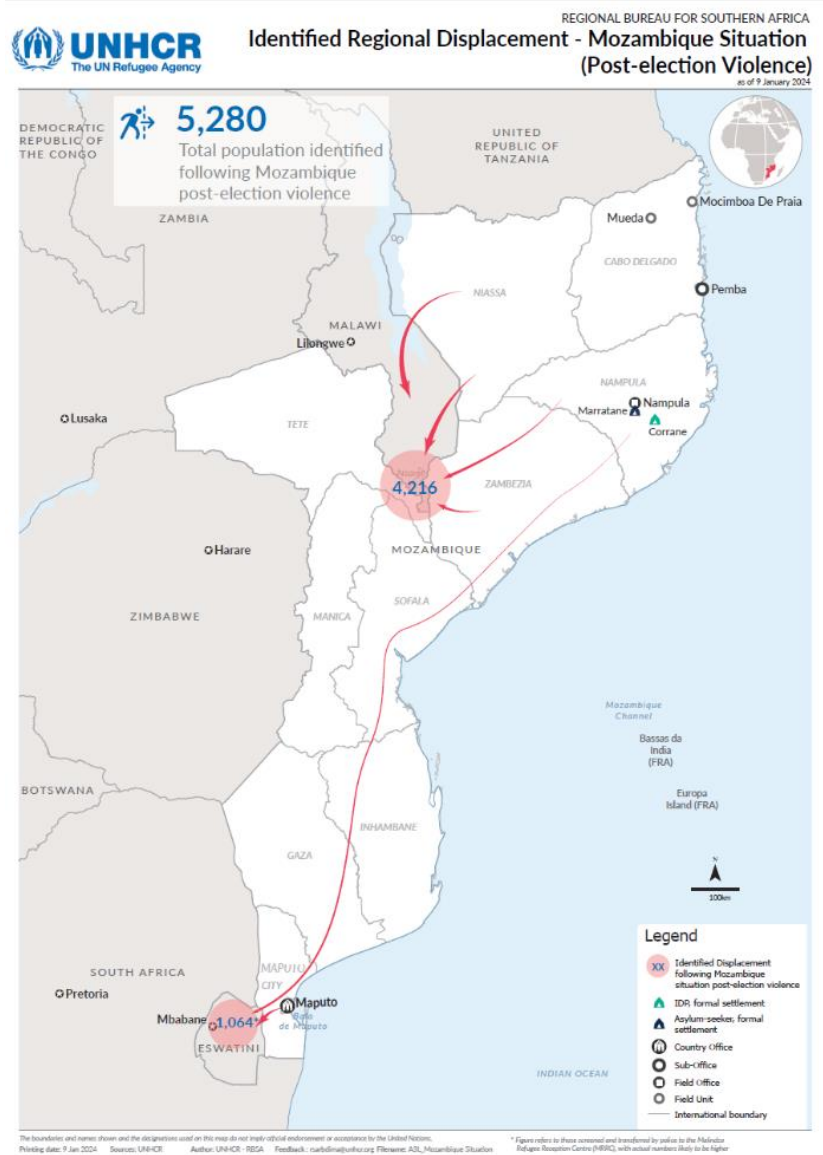
MALAWI

Population Movements & Registration

- As of 9 January, **Malawi's Department for Refugees, with the support of UNHCR, had completed the registration of 4,216 individuals**, the vast majority of whom had arrived in the Nsanje District of Malawi between the 23 and 24 December. These people mainly originate from the Morrumbala District of Zambezia province, having made the journey to Malawi on foot. Some 2,400 (61 per cent) of those registered are women, while over 700 people with specific needs were identified (17 per cent), including 312 elderly persons, 145 women at risk and 69 individuals with serious medical conditions. Between 5 - 9 January, a further 249 people arrived.

- On 5 January, the **Nsanje District Council- with the support of the Malawi Defence Forces (MDF) and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs- began the relocation of these new arrivals to the rapidly prepared Nyamithuthu settlement**. The authorities maintain that the transfer of new arrivals to Nyamithuthu is essential in coordinating the provision of assistance and basic services- with the existing collective centres dispersed over a wide area- and to empty the two schools serving as collective centres, with the school year having started.

- As of 9 January, 1,703 individuals have been relocated to the Nyamithuthu Settlement, including from the nearby Nyamithuthu Primary School. Relocation progress has been delayed by transportation challenges. As part of the new hosting arrangements, the Government has designated the Tengani Evacuation Centre as a transit point for all new arrivals, who will only be transferred to Nyamithuthu once screening and registration has been completed at Tengani.
- On 9 January, UNHCR and the Department of Refugees began the registration and assessment of new arrivals in the Dedza District- some 50km south of the capital Lilongwe and 300km north of Nsanje- having received **reports from the Dedza District Council regarding the arrival of a further 650 people from Mozambique**. According to the District Council, these individuals are residing with family and friends across several neighbourhoods.



Needs & Response

- Most new arrivals have fled with minimal belongings. **The immediate priority remains efforts to scale up the provision of life-saving assistance to address the most critical humanitarian needs.**

Protection

- **New arrivals continue to face considerable protection risks** both during their journey to Malawi and upon arrival.
- During the journey to Malawi people have reported being separated from their loved ones as they fled. Furthermore, it is understood that people travelled by foot from Mozambique, leaving those with specific needs – including 312 elderly persons, 69 people with serious medical illnesses and 33 disabled persons- particularly vulnerable.
- Upon arrival in Malawi, people, especially women and girls, have also faced considerable protection risks due to the poor living conditions and lack of basic infrastructure within the collective centres and Nyamithuthu settlement hosting them. These risks stem from issues including the lack of sanitation infrastructure, specifically segregated WASH facilities, and basic protection safeguards such as lighting and fencing. Furthermore, shortages of food and other basic supplies may lead people to resort to harmful coping strategies, particularly among groups with specific needs who may lack support networks.

Food Security & Nutrition

- As of 9 January, there have been limited food supplies available in the collective centres and the new settlement. On 9 January, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) supplied 200 bags of maize to the Nyamithuthu settlement, while community preschools also donated some fifty 25-kilogram bags of porridge flour to children at the centres. Besides these distributions, there has only been a single one-off donation of basic food items (maize, flour, and beans) to the seven collective centres, which have been insufficient to cover needs. In the meantime, there are reports that some people have crossed back into Mozambique to collect supplies, with small shops also being set up by new arrivals selling fruits and other items.
- Should the situation further deteriorate and/ or the stay of new arrivals become more protracted, WFP has indicated that it is ready to provide a food assistance package comprising 25 kg of Maize flour per household, with a cash top-up of approximately US\$7 per person per month, over a two-month period.
- With over half the population of Nsanje District experiencing crisis levels (phase 3) of food insecurity as per the Integrated Phase Classification system, there are reports of host community members attempting to register as Mozambicans to access food assistance. Careful consideration will be required to mitigate potential tensions and ensure that the response upholds do-no-harm principles.

CCCM/ Shelter & NFI

- The Government of Malawi, through the Malawi Defense Forces (MDF) and DoDMA, continue to oversee the **relocation of people from the seven collective centres to the Nyamithuthu settlement**. The relocation exercise has been slowed due to a lack of fuel and delays in clearing land and pitching tents resulting from capacity and resource constraints.
- As of 9 January, **79 of the 500 tents supplied by UNHCR have been erected at the new settlement**. The Nsanje District Commissioner has appealed to partners for their support in expediting the land clearance, which would allow more tents to be erected; the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) is providing lamps to ensure that the settlement has at least a minimal level of lighting.
- Within the collective centres, shelter conditions remain particularly challenging, with a lack of space leading to people sleeping outside on the ground. Lack of lighting and other basic safeguards are also extremely concerning.
- As previously reported, CRI kits- comprising 600 blankets, 100 twenty-litre jerrycans, 200 kitchen sets, 100 solar lamps, 100 basins, 600 sleeping mats, 200 tarpaulins and 400 bars of soap- have been provided to approximately 600 people following an initial distribution by UNHCR on 28 December. UNHCR is working with partners to cover additional needs.

WASH

- Lack of water at the Nyamithuthu site has also slowed the relocation process. As a temporary solution, Oxfam has provided four 5,000-liter water bladders, which will be filled with water bowsers twice daily for the next month. UNICEF is also in the process of sourcing ten 1,000-liter water tanks. At the same time, there continue to be extensive gaps in sanitation. Oxfam has pledged to construct 40 latrines, of which 25 are currently under construction. However, this remains far short of the minimum 200 required.
- At the five collective centres still occupied, there remains an acute lack of water or sanitation infrastructure. People are reportedly resorting to using the nearby Shire River for water provision and sanitary needs, presenting considerable hygiene-related health risks- including contamination of water sources- and protection risks for women and girls who are without access to private, segregated, or proximate WASH facilities.

Health

- A temporary health post has been established at the Nyamithuthu settlement, which is providing basic health services to the newly relocated population. No health services have been reported in the collective centres.

Education

- On 10 January, there was an initial meeting with the head of the Nsanje District Education Department to explore options and identify data requirements to better understand education needs.

Coordination & Partnerships

- The Nsanje District Council- under the leadership of the District Commissioner- has convened an emergency coordination committee to oversee the provision of assistance in close proximity to new arrivals. This committee takes a multi-stakeholder and whole-of-government approach, comprising international humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, UNICEF, Oxfam, and the Red Cross, alongside government departments, including the Department for Refugees, Malawi Immigration, the Malawi Defense Forces (MDF) and the local health authorities.
- Since 28 December, UNHCR has had a sustained presence on the ground in Nsanje, supporting the coordination of the response and engaging directly with the local authorities and partners.

ESWATINI

Population Movements & Registration

- As of 10 January, **at least 1,064 individuals have arrived in Eswatini and are being sheltered at the critically overcrowded Malindza Refugee Reception Centre (MRRC)**, up from 950, as reported in External Update 1 released on 31 December. While the daily number of new arrivals has significantly reduced from a peak of 399 on 29 December, regular daily arrivals have continued over the reporting period. As previously reported, the actual number of new arrivals may be much higher, with many likely to have travelled onwards to urban areas undetected.
- **The majority of those arriving in Eswatini are from the Great Lakes region- specifically Burundi and Rwanda- and have refugee or asylum seeker status in Mozambique.** The verification and registration of new arrivals is ongoing. As of 8 January, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) of Eswatini, with the support of UNHCR staff, have biometrically registered 161 new arrivals. Logistical challenges, including internet connectivity issues and heavy rainfall, have slowed progress.
- On 8 January, **the Government of Lesotho confirmed the arrival of 3 individuals to Lesotho.** All three new arrivals are of Rwandan origin, having previously been refugees or asylum seekers in Mozambique. It is understood that these individuals travelled onward to Lesotho via Eswatini, where they had been sheltering at the MRRC. They are currently being hosted at the Mohalalitoe Refugee Reception Centre, supported by the Government of Lesotho and UNHCR's partner, Skillshare Lesotho.

Needs & Response

- **Those new arrivals identified and screened continue to be transferred to the Malindza Refugee Reception Centre (MRRC).** This facility currently hosts well over 1,000 individuals- some for a prolonged duration- significantly exceeding its designated maximum capacity of 250. Amidst this overcrowding, all facilities within the centre are currently being used as overflow sites to host new arrivals, including, for instance, the hall, library, and warehouses. While the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) has provided three large tents to accommodate male arrivals, these are unsuitable due to the current rains, underlining the urgent need for more sustainable shelter solutions.
- In addition to previously documented **responses at the MRRC**- including the donation of CRIs by several organizations (including UNHCR), regular provision of hot meals by NDMA and health screening of new arrivals conducted by the Ministry of Health (MoH)- since the last report the Government of Eswatini, in coordination with UNICEF and other WASH partners, has begun the rehabilitation of WASH facilities at the centre. This intervention aims to increase basic service coverage with, for instance, the current ratio of latrines to population exceeding the emergency threshold of 1:50. In addition, further food donations have been received from the Catholic Church over recent days. However, as previously reported, there also remain gaps in food and CRI, with insufficient capacity to either support additional new arrivals or host populations over a longer duration,

Coordination & Partnerships

- In Eswatini, the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), in close coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), has coordinated the response to new arrivals at the MRRC. The NDMA has also activated a national emergency coordination cell.
- Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN agencies in Eswatini are jointly working on supporting the government with the response.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- On 8 January, the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) convened a meeting with UN organizations and relevant partners to discuss the situation at the Mozambique-South Africa border and preparedness in the event of a significant number of new arrivals to South Africa. This was followed by a technical meeting on 9 January between UN agencies and DHA to discuss in more detail potential UN support under the contingency planning scenarios outlined.
- In Zimbabwe, the Commissioner for Refugees also called a meeting to review contingency plans and assess preparedness if there are significant arrivals from Mozambique.

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