

MOZAMBIQUE SITUATION POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE & CYCLONE RESPONSES

03 February 2025



Mozambique's National Institute of Disaster Management donates 72 tonnes of essential supplies to support registered asylum seekers in Malawi. ©UNHCR/ Davis Uwizeye

HIGHLIGHTS

- **While political tensions persist and small-scale protests continue, the situation in Mozambique remained largely stable.**
- In collaboration with the Mozambique National Institute for Disaster Risk Management (INGD), UNHCR and partners continue to assist communities affected by Cyclones Chido and Dikeledi. As response efforts expand, the full scale of the devastation is becoming clearer, **with nearly 453,000 people impacted by Chido and 283,000 by Dikeledi. To address urgent needs, UNHCR has released a [Critical Needs document to support 360,000 people](#)**, even as protection services and humanitarian assistance continue to be scaled up in the hardest-hit communities.
- **As of 03 February, host governments, with support from UNHCR, have verified over 8,600 new arrivals from Mozambique in Malawi and Eswatini.** UNHCR and the Malawi Department of Refugees have completed the registration of 7,536 individuals, the vast majority of whom arrived in the Nsanje District in early January or the last week of December. The increase of 206 persons is due to a registration backlog. The number of people who have arrived in Eswatini and have been screened/ transferred to the Malindza Refugee Reception Centres (MRRC) remains at 1,104. Currently, **700 asylum seekers remain at the MRRC, while 130 are believed to have returned to Mozambique, and others have relocated to Manzini and other areas.**
- **The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) has reported new asylum seeker arrivals in Eswatini. Six new arrivals were also reported in Lesotho.** While no new arrivals have been reported in Malawi, the number of registered asylum seekers in Malawi is increasing as the registration of the previous arrivals continues.

Country	Total number of new arrivals from Mozambique	Number of new arrivals since last update (24 January 2024)
Malawi	7,536	+206
Eswatini	1,104	-
Lesotho	9	6
Zimbabwe	4	-
TOTAL	8,653	+212

MOZAMBIQUE

Security and Political Developments

- The situation has been returning to normal for most people after the post-election violence, **though political tensions remain high in some areas, occasionally leading to protests**. On 27 January, protests escalated after the state-controlled toll road company Revimo resumed toll collections, resulting in clashes with riot police, arson attacks on two toll gates, and the offices of Trans African Concessions. In Manhiça, protesters reportedly set fire to the mayor's residence on 29 January following the alleged abduction of a Mondlane supporter and the fatal police shooting of two demonstrators.
- Despite the improvement in the overall security situation, **ongoing lawlessness and criminality continue - particularly in the northern provinces of Zambézia, Nampula, and Cabo Delgado**. Unknown groups reportedly stop motorists and extort money and goods, prompting the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM) to reinstate military escorts along key routes.

Needs & Response

Post-election Violence

- Following the completion of registration and verification, the **National Institute for Refugees (INAR) confirmed that 327 refugees (206 households) who had self-relocated from Nampula city to Maratane settlement** after the 23 December 2024 violence are now officially registered. Initially, an estimated 1,000 individuals had moved to Maratane, but many returned to the city once the situation stabilized. Some of those who self-relocated were already registered in the settlement. Additionally, 49 individuals (31 households) who had previously been in Maratane but were unregistered were also included in the process.

Cyclone Chido and Dikeledi Impact & Response

- UNHCR has released a [Critical Needs document to support 360,000 people affected by Cyclones Chido and Dikeledi](#). Cyclone Chido, a powerful Category 4 storm, made landfall on 15 December 2024, followed by Cyclone Dikeledi, which struck Nampula on 13 January. The cyclones caused widespread devastation across Nampula and Cabo Delgado, regions already hosting large numbers of displaced people.
- In partnership with Helpcode, **UNHCR distributed 700 GBV Dignity Kits in the Jonga locality of Chiure and Mecufi districts, reaching 400 women and 300 adolescent girls**. The initiative is critical in addressing the growing risks of early marriage and sexual violence, which have intensified in the wake of the cyclone Chido. These distributions are vital in promoting dignity, safety, and empowerment for vulnerable women and girls, helping mitigate the social, cultural, and economic challenges they face.
- UNHCR distributed **500 CRI kits to displaced individuals in Ngalane site, Muaja neighbourhood, Metuge district, benefiting 2,443 people**. These essential items support families who lost their belongings due to the cyclone Chido, helping them regain stability and dignity as recovery efforts continue.

Coordination & Partnerships

- The overall humanitarian response in the country continues to be coordinated under the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster system. 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.

- Regular meetings continue to be convened between international humanitarian organizations and INGD to discuss the cyclone response, critical priorities and challenges in responding to affected populations.

ESWATINI AND LESOTHO

Population Movements & Registration

- As of 30 January, **at least 1,104 individuals from Mozambique are in Eswatini, with many initially housed at the severely overcrowded Malindza Refugee Reception Centre (MRRC)**. On 01 February, the NDMA confirmed the arrival of some refugee families at the MRRC from urban areas within Eswatini, though details on profiles remain pending. Currently, **700 asylum seekers remain at the MRRC, while 130 are believed to have returned to Mozambique, and others have relocated to Manzini and other areas**. Despite the reduced numbers, there still is a need to sustain the support.
- **There have been six new arrivals in Lesotho**, bringing the total number of new asylum seekers recorded in Lesotho to nine. Having fled Mozambique late last year, they travelled through Eswatini and then South Africa before reaching Lesotho **to reunite with family members**.

Needs & Response

- Despite a reduction in the number of asylum seekers at the MRRC, **overcrowding remains a serious challenge, with the centre still operating at nearly three times its capacity**. While progress has been made in addressing gaps in assistance and services, **sustained support is crucial to meet the needs of those still at the centre**. UNHCR is exploring a more sustainable cash assistance package to help residents cover their immediate needs and ease decongestion by supporting access to housing, employment, and education within host communities. This aligns with UNHCR's policy to avoid camp-like settings, ensuring the MRRC functions as a transit centre for short-term stays.

Protection

- On 18 January, UNHCR and the Eswatini Ministry of Health held focus group discussions with asylum seekers at the MRRC. Many were undecided about returning or staying, with education being a major concern due to language differences in school curricula. While some were reluctant to return, they cited limited livelihood opportunities in Eswatini. Others were open to returning, encouraged by government calls for business owners to go back. A follow-up discussion is set for 5 February 2025.

Education

- **84 refugee students from the new arrivals have enrolled at Malindza Central Primary and Mpaka Primary School, increasing the need for more teachers**. Integrating vetted qualified refugee teachers is expected to ease the strain on local schools and help students adapt, though language barriers remain challenging. To address this, after-school English lessons are being introduced. Mpaka High School, which has admitted 47 refugee students, has experience accommodating foreign students.
- Education support for asylum seekers is limited, with World Vision Eswatini covering uniforms and school fees only for existing refugee children, leaving new arrivals without assistance. The Ministry of Education is working with humanitarian organizations **to support refugee students and assess their eligibility for free primary education under the 2010 Free Primary Education Act**. For now, new arrivals are paying their own school fees.

Food Security

- **In addition to the two hot meals provided per day by the government, WFP has donated additional food supplies- comprising rice, beans and vegetable oil- which will cover food requirements for the next three months**. UNHCR is also on standby to provide short-term feeding support. As indicated above, UNHCR has also conducted a market feasibility assessment ahead of potential cash support to help asylum seekers cover their basic needs.

Health

- An **MoH-supported health team continues to support outreach and awareness among asylum seekers, covering hygiene, mental health and infection prevention and control.** They also conduct a health risk assessment and carry out risk communication. This is being supplemented by a health awareness session facilitated by the MoH, covering hygiene, mental health, and infection prevention and control. Regular screening is ongoing for waterborne diseases, particularly cholera, with no reported cases.
- **All new arrivals have access to a local health clinic staffed by four nurses, offering basic care and referral services.** The clinic, equipped with an on-site ambulance, serves both the MRRC population and the surrounding host community.

WASH

- The current **water storage capacity at the centre stands at 27,000 litres (six tanks),** while damaged water taps have been repaired.

Coordination & Partnerships

- The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), in close coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), is overseeing the response to new arrivals at the MRRC, with weekly coordination meetings being co-led by NDMA and MoHA. At the operational level, an Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) comprising UN agencies, NGOs, development partners, and government counterparts is managing the day-to-day multi-sectoral response.

MALAWI

Population Movements & Registration

- As of 03 February, **Malawi's Department for Refugees (DFR), with UNHCR's support, has registered 7,536 individuals,** most of whom arrived in Nsanje, Dedza, Mulanje and Mwanza districts in late December 2024. Registration has resumed following the completion of the relocation exercise of asylum seekers from collective centres to the Nyamithuthu settlement. However, it should be noted that about **361 unregistered asylum seekers at the Tengani transit centre are yet to be cleared by immigration.**
- UNHCR has not received any confirmed reports of returns from Malawi to Mozambique.

Needs & Response

Protection

- A return intention **survey interviewed 2,053 households, achieving a 56.4% response rate.** 78.7% expressed willingness to return to Mozambique once security improves, while 21.3%, mainly elderly individuals, preferred to stay due to the challenges of relocation. A visiting Mozambican government delegation addressed asylum seekers, assuring them that security conditions back home had improved and they were welcome to come home. The majority of the asylum seekers who attended the briefing expressed their willingness to return if assisted to do so and if their safety and security can be guaranteed. The delegation pledged to work with the Malawian government to provide logistical assistance for those in need when they are ready to return.



- Youth Net & Counselling (YONECO), a local NGO, manages the Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs), which are still available and ongoing through the helpline and in-person consultations. **Common issues reported through the helpline include child protection, communication gaps during the food and cash distribution, and other issues for the Department for Refugees to address.**
- A joint team from **UNHCR and DFR conducted a registration exercise for asylum seekers in Mulanje and Mwanza** on 29 and 30 January 2025. The team **assessed and registered 20 households (102 individuals)** and subsequently distributed food and Core Relief Items. Currently, **361 asylum seekers are still awaiting immigration clearance** before they can be registered by UNHCR and DFR.

Food Security

- **Food distribution and cash top-up exercise by WFP have been completed** at Nyamithuthu settlement and Khope, Mnembe, Chadzuka and Nyachilenda evacuation centres as of 03 February 2025. **A total of 87.5 tonnes of maize was distributed to 3500 households, and in addition to food, a total of MWK88,125,000 (US\$ 50,000) was so far distributed.**
- The Mozambican Government, through the National Institute of Disaster Management of Mozambique (INGD), **has donated seventy-two (72) tonnes of various items to be distributed to registered asylum seekers in Nyamithuthu.** The items included maize flour, rice, beans, salt, blankets, mosquito nets and tents.

CCCM/ Shelter & NFI

- As of 03 February, **UNHCR finished pitching 500 family-sized tents**, which were supplied by UNHCR and erected with the support of the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and Red Cross volunteers.
- **UNHCR has dispatched an additional 164 family tents to Nyamithuthu**, set to be pitched this week in preparation for the relocation of asylum seekers from Mnembe, Khope, and Chadzuka evacuation centres. **A visiting Mozambican government delegation also donated 30 tents, bringing the total allocated to 194.**
- Various partners continue to provide core relief and non-food items to support asylum seekers. Last week, UNHCR, with support from the Department for Refugees (DFR), **distributed Core Relief Items (CRIs) to 482 displaced households** in Nyachilenda, Mulanje, Mwanza, and Nyamithuthu. **World Vision provided non-food items (NFIs) to 601 households** in Chadzuka, Nyachilenda, and Bitilinyu evacuation centres, prioritizing families with children under five. As of 29 January 2025, **CARD has distributed 13,440 soap tablets to 2,688 households and 1,040 energy-saving stoves to 966 households.**

WASH

- Water trucking by UNICEF through Oxfam was completed on 31 January 2025. **From 1 February, SELF-HELP Africa took over and will continue services until 15 February 2025.** After that, a new partner will be needed to sustain support. However, IsraAID has expressed interest in assisting the WASH sector, particularly with water trucking.
- **So far, 224 m3 (1,224,000 litres) of water has been supplied to Nyamithuthu settlement. However, with the increase in population, the current water production through water trucking is insufficient.** Apparently, the population is being served with 13L/P/D below the UNHCR emergency standard of 15L/P/D with a daily production of 66,000 litres. There is a need to increase daily water production through water trucking to at least meet the emergency minimum standard of 15L/P/D.
- At Nyamithuthu, **73 latrines have been completed, including 58 by Oxfam with UNICEF and Médecins Sans Frontières, and 15 mobile toilets** installed with support from the Department of Disaster Management Affairs and World Vision. **Welthungerhilfe, with UNHCR, is finalizing 79 latrine superstructures and 20 bathing shelters.** However, significant gaps remain, as more facilities are needed to meet the emergency standard of 20 people per WASH unit. Open defecation is widespread, posing a serious health risk.

Health & Nutrition

- **WHO has expanded the Nyamithuthu clinic with two additional communal tents**, improving access to integrated primary healthcare services, including child health, HIV testing, and chronic disease screening.

- **IsraAID has also committed to support with human resources (15 outreach medical personnel)** to run the integrated mobile clinics at the settlements once a week for a period of one month (February). This intervention aims to address health needs in the settlements where they have limited access to regular healthcare services.
- A health assessment by the Ministry of Health, supported by WHO, has prioritized response actions and mapped referral pathways. WHO provided malaria kits, strengthened outbreak surveillance, and supported routine vaccinations through local health centres. **The Malaria kits donated include 500 vials of artesunate and 1700 syringes which are earmarked to provide treatment to over 200 severe Malaria cases.**
- WHO and Nsanje District Hospital are supporting **Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) in delivering daily health education sessions, reaching 70 people per day.** These sessions focus on toilet use, handwashing, cleanliness, and STI prevention as part of ongoing risk communication and community engagement efforts.
- Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) are continuously actively providing nutrition services, including growth monitoring, nutrition screening, and referrals to nearby health facilities for enrolment in specialized nutrition programs such as the Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) and Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP).

Education

- UNICEF pledged to support Nyamithuthu Primary School with learning materials in a bid to promote refugee inclusion. Currently, there are 18 children enrolled at Nyamithuthu Primary School (6 girls, 12 boys). **The education sector has identified 105 out of 243 school-age children at Nyamithuthu settlement who are ready to be enrolled in school.** More efforts are needed from the education sector to expedite the enrolment process.

Coordination & Partnerships

- On 31 January, the Nsanje District Council, led by the District Commissioner, convened a district interagency coordination meeting to coordinate assistance for new arrivals. Participants included government departments, security agencies, and local and international humanitarian organizations. The meeting provided updates on ongoing interventions and discussions on addressing identified gaps. The next interagency meeting is scheduled for 7 February 2025.

Contacts – Tina Ghelli – Head of External Engagement, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (ghelli@unhcr.org); Edward Ogolla – Communications Officer, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (ogolla@unhcr.org)