



MALAWI CYCLONE UPDATE
April 15, 2023 - One month later

In the aftermath of the longest and strongest cyclone ever recorded in the Southern hemisphere, Cyclone Freddy has left Malawi with:

- *Over 2 million people affected.
- *A death toll now over 1,000.
- *Half a million people displaced now living in over 760 camps.
- *A 30-50% decrease in crop yield expected in the affected regions like ours.
- *Fears of increased cholera deaths in what is already the worst year ever.



In the nearly 12 years I've lived in Malawi, I've found it beneficial to modify my expectations of nearly all things and to see "chaos" as the all-encompassing descriptive word for life here. You might question that if that's the norm, how must things be after a devastating cyclone?

With the help of your willingness to come alongside, Miqlat's kids have thankfully all found shelter and food is gradually being sourced locally, but the government is over its head in trying to make decisions about how to deal with all facets of the challenged infrastructure. Roads are impassable, major bridges are down all over, cutting off accessibility to huge areas, and school schedules have been changing almost daily as damage assessments have slowly trickled in. We have tried our best to carry on at Miqlat schools, but it hasn't been easy. The unclear and poorly timed communication from the

education department has resulted in chaotic school attendance by both teachers and students. Currently, some schools are open and some are closed, mostly for no apparent reason. Additionally, since the cyclone, half the teachers at the Thuchila school have had to wade, up to hip deep, through the Thuchila River or ride their bicycles over an hour each way in order to get to work. Huge kudos to them and all our Miqlat teachers for prioritizing the welfare of their students and continuing to teach despite the difficulties and confusion of the situation.

There's a popular saying in Malawi – "Pongono, pongono, we are moving." It means little by little, we are progressing. Living with that mindset is what has always helped the people here survive amidst harsh and unforgiving circumstances and environments – AND what has made it so challenging for those of us from developed countries to function well. Whereas, I must confess, I am still so easily frustrated by the many barriers to success, on most any day, with most any task, my Malawian colleagues take it all in their stride, pour grace over every situation and rejoice at every victory, no matter how small or hard-won. It humbles me constantly because it's just so obvious which way God would have us move.

So . . . moving forward . . . Pongono, pongono, people will bide their time for now and begin to rebuild their houses in July/August, make their way across rivers on foot, carrying their goods on their heads, patiently waiting for someone to come and rebuild the bridge, and find ways to feed themselves with the hope that the harvest season next year will be more fruitful. And, little by little things WILL progress.



Thank you for praying for the health and welfare of the children and their families throughout this recovery period. Every blessing to you for pitching in to help as you always do!

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