

Alert

Malawi

Massive Flooding in Karonga district

Geneva, 11 April 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

For the past 2 to 3 weeks, Malawi has been experiencing high rainfall in most of its districts. On the night of the 7th of April heavy rains flooded Karonga district leaving around 3,287 people from 60 villages destitute. With the ongoing assessments the numbers for the people affected is expected to rise. Both North Rukuru and Songwe rivers burst their banks, in the process collapsing a dyke that was constructed to block North Rukuru river from reaching the district headquarters causing extensive flooding around the District Assembly including the main market, offices and residential houses. Most houses have collapsed and people are staying in the open on the main road to Tanzania. Some of the affected people are currently staying in schools. Fields have been washed away and some have been submerged in water. An area stretching nearly 60 kilometres has been affected.

2. Impact

According to the Civil Protection Committee in Karonga, three (3) Traditional Authorities (TAs) have been affected with four (4) people reported dead (*3 under the age of 10 and 1 adult*). According to the District Commissioner Gasten Macheke¹, in TA Kilupula only, 2,647 people from 32 villages have been affected and 189 houses have collapsed. Two people have been reported dead from there. In Mwakaboko about 492 people from 12 villages have been affected and 30 houses have collapsed. In TA Kyungu an estimated 2000 households have been affected. However, the figures might rise since most parts are still inaccessible to allow a comprehensive assessment to be conducted. The district headquarters including the district markets are closed as they are submerged under water.

Most of the areas have been rendered inaccessible and are very hard to reach. Due to water logging there is also a lot of water coming from the ground as a result of saturation.

The most immediate assistance required according to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs is shelter and food aid. As a recovery response mechanism, seed will be required to enable families to replant their gardens and fields.

¹ The times (<http://www.bnltimes.com/national/42-all/705-karonga-flood-affect-3287.html>)

3. National and international response

The Malawi government has been contacting non-governmental organizations for assistance. The Malawi defence force has been called in to help with heavy trucks to reach some of the areas. Malawi RedCross has responded with bed nets, and blankets. Well wishers and business people have raised close to 600,000 Malawian Kwacha (approx. 4,000 USD) to help the affected people. The local District Assembly has also donated some tarpaulins that remained during the Karonga earthquake disaster. GTZ has donated 100 ltrs of fuel to be used for the assessment. Paladin Africa has donated 45 bags of maize grain, each of 50kg.

4. ACT Alliance response

At present, the Malawi ACT forum has not responded physically to the affected population but the intention is there to respond as a forum through the members working in the affected districts. ACT members are attending coordination meetings for the response at both national and district levels. The ACT Forum's response is being coordinated by the Malawi ACT Forum Coordinator. The forum is intending to respond through Evangelical Lutheran Development Services (ELDS) who work in the affected district.

5. Planned activities

ACT Malawi Forum through ELDS is planning to respond through an ACT Appeal in the following areas:

- winter crop production and livestock re-stocking
- provision of shelter through reconstruction of the affected houses
- water and sanitation programs
- psychosocial programs

ACT members in Malawi are: Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), the Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme (ELDS), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), DanChurchAid (DCA), Christian Aid, Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO), Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM).

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer (Jean_Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

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