In March and April 2019, Southern Africa was hit by two consecutive tropical cyclones that left a trail of death, damage and destruction in their paths. In March, Tropical Cyclone Idai weather system’s impact came in three waves: in early March, the low pressure system caused flooding in Malawi and in Zambezia and Tete provinces of Mozambique; on 14 March, Cyclone Idai made landfall near the port City of Beira tearing roofs off homes and buildings; finally, over the weekend of 16-17 March, the weather system carried torrential rains across multiple areas in Mozambique—leaving 3,000km² of land submerged and stranding people on houses and trees—and Zimbabwe, where landslides devastated villages. On 24 April, Tropical Cyclone Kenneth passed by the Comoros Islands, hitting the northern island of Ngazidja and flooding several villages. The Cyclone made landfall in Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique the following day, flattening entire villages. This was the first time in recorded history that two cyclones struck the coast of Mozambique in such close succession, and the furthest north that a cyclone had ever made landfall in the country.

Overall, it is estimated that more than 3.8 million people were affected by the cyclones and floods in the four countries. The storms impacted health and education facilities in all four countries, and caused significant displacement and protection concerns. In Mozambique alone, nearly 285,000 houses were destroyed or damaged. Both cyclones swept through the region during the main harvest, destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of crops, which will significantly impact food security in the months ahead. The humanitarian response in all four countries, led by the respective governments, rapidly scaled up, reaching more than 3 million people.