



Malawi Flood 2019 Final Report

Partnership agreement between
Water Survival Box
&
Khalsa Aid International



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Cyclone Idai & Heavy Flooding in Malawi 2019

Partnership Between Khalsa Aid International and Water Survival Box

Background to the Disaster



Malawi is a relatively safe democratic country but is also regarded as one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Malawi is a landlocked country, located in the southeastern region of Africa and shares a land border with Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. The country spans over 45,000 square miles and the Great Rift Valley runs through the country from north to south. Lake Malawi is the very large body of water which takes up a third of Malawi's area and makes up over three quarters of the country's eastern border.

Lilongwe is the capital city of Malawi and the most populated with almost a million residents. The city is located in central Malawi and has the river Lilongwe running through the capital. Blantyre is the financial capital of Malawi and located just over 300km south of the capital city.

Malawi has a population of just over 18 million people and is one of the safest countries in Africa despite being one of the poorest economically with just over 50% of the population living below the poverty line and 25% living in extreme poverty. The economy of the country is dependent on agriculture with 80% of the population living in rural areas, with agriculture accounting for a third of Malawi's GDP.

The East coast of Africa on average sees 10 cyclones per year (the number and strength of these can vary significantly from year to year. Just like hurricanes or typhoons, cyclones are formed over sea and can see ferocious wind speeds and drop a devastating amount of water over land causing flash flooding and a potential massive risk to life if over a residential area.



Phalombe
Chikwawa
Nsanje

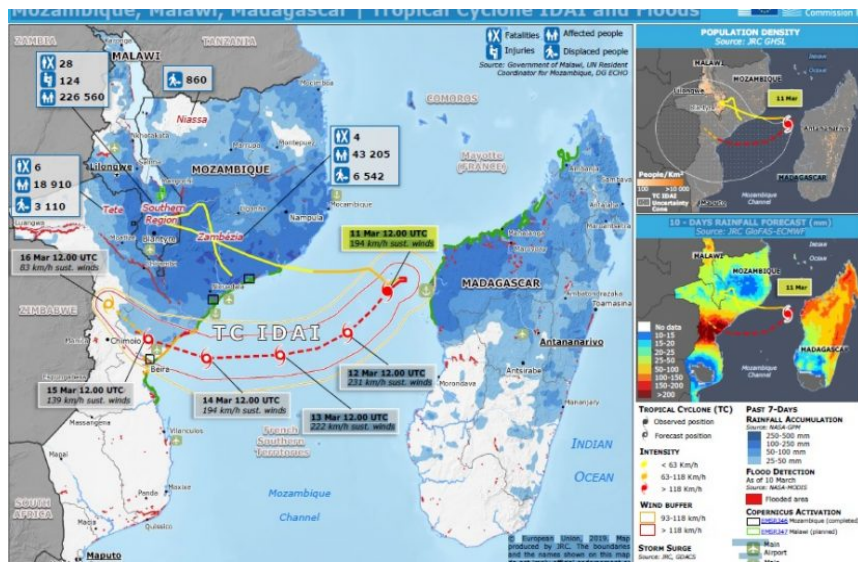


Cyclone Idai

Tropical Cyclone Idai was a long-lived storm that wreaked havoc across southeastern regions of Africa and various islands across the Indian Ocean. The storm was very unique for numerous reasons, primarily because of the duration it was active for, the 4th March until the 21st March. Idai had an unusual trajectory, which saw the storm make landfall twice.

When the storm was over mainland Africa, Idai caused a widespread devastation across northern Mozambique, southern Malawi and eastern Zimbabwe before moving back out to sea. The storm then took a sharp turn making landfall in southern Mozambique, causing further damage in an already devastated region.

The trail of destruction left in the wake of Cyclone Idai was shocking and disastrous for the entire region which was already struggling with severe poverty. The storm was responsible for the deaths of over 1,300 people with many more people still missing. The storm is now on record as one of the most powerful and devastating cyclones to hit Africa and the second most deadly cyclone on record globally.



The local people of Malawi suffered heavily at the expense of tropical cyclone Idai. With large rural areas in the south connected by dirt tracks and with few tarmac roads, the severe flooding caused by the heavy rainfall left large populations of people cut off from the major towns and restricted their access to food and clean drinking water. Thousands of people were rendered homeless, with their personal belongings washed away. Among them were farmers who also lost their crops and livestock. Repercussions of the storm also gave rise to heightened risk of contracting waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea.

[Background to Relationship between KAI & WSB](#)

Khalsa Aid International (KAI) have formed a partnership with the Rotarian charity - Water Survival Box (WSB) and Rotary club since October 2017. In September 2018, in response to the devastating floods in Kerala, Southern India, WSB sent a consignment of 200 units of their water survival boxes to Kochi airport where the KAI team in India would receive the consignment, clear customs, transport to a secure storage unit and then finally distribute to those who are in the most need.



After the successful distribution of the WSBs in Kerala and the published final report, Khalsa Aid International and Rotary agreed to work together in response to future natural disasters where WSB will ship consignments of their boxes to the closest international airport to the natural disaster, and KAI will take responsibility for the consignment once it has arrived at the destination.



[Khalsa Aid International Response to Cyclone Idai](#)

[Khalsa Aid International's history in Malawi](#)

KAI has been providing aid via on-going projects to rural communities of Malawi since 2015. KAI has focused on providing clean drinking water by way of borehole drilling and constructing water pumps to those communities without easy access to clean drinking water.

In the early months of 2019, KAI had increased its work in Malawi and

neighbouring Zambia just prior to tropical cyclone Idai tearing through South Eastern Africa, with a number of volunteers visiting the region.

KAI has been based in Blantyre, the financial capital of Malawi, whilst overseeing the on-going projects in the country. They have a longstanding relationship with a local businessman, Zahid Bobat of Blue Water Drilling, who has lived in Malawi for over 8 years and shares his wealth of local knowledge with KAI, as well as providing a lot of the logistical support to the team of



volunteers once they are in the country. He has helped establish relationships between KAI and many important companies and individuals.

KAI also established a relationship with Bobby Singh, the President of the Malawi Gurdwara Sahib in

Blantyre. Bobby Singh has provided KAI with volunteers, food drops to local communities and also provided KAI with storage facility for the WSBs.

Arrival of WSB to Malawi

Rotary were notified by KAI to send the consignment of WSB's to Malawi on the 10/05/2019 once Zahid had contacted the customs department in Malawi to confirm that the consignment would be able to clear customs on arrival at Blantyre International Airport.

The WSB's were transported to a secure storage unit provided by the Malawi Gurdwara Sahib in the Limbe district of Blantyre, which was manned 24 hours of the day.

The consignment would be stored until July when the KAI team would return to commence the distribution plan.



Creating the Distribution Plan

Local Needs Assessment

A KAI team from the UK travelled to Malawi on the 12th March 2019 to conduct a needs assessment following the disaster from Cyclone Idai.

Work was slow to start with as many organisations flooded the area and a lack of available resources were available. During this time the team travelled to many different areas to identify the worst affected locations. The team travelled from Phalombe all the way down to Nsanje. Following the needs assessment, the team decided to mostly work in Chikwawa district as they felt this was one of the worst affected areas. They did, however, also coordinate food drops in Nsanje and Phalombe.



During the initial needs' assessment, the team identified that the major concerns were lack of food and basic equipment. They decided to distribute food packs and blankets. In total 4,600 food packs and 6,600 blankets were distributed. 2,000 necessity packs which included items such as candles, matches, soap, plastic bowl, tarpaulin, mosquito nets and blankets were also distributed.



Once the shipment of WSB's had been confirmed and sent from London Heathrow, the team worked with another local organisation who directly support the local beneficiaries for the WSB, Al Ehsan and Al Bir trust (EBTrust). The distribution of the WSBs was planned and carried out in July by a KAI team, led by Bharpur Singh Gill, and a member of Rotary, Dorothy Cretney. The main reasons for the delay was from the feedback received from EBTrust after they had been assessing the needs of the locals affected by the disaster. The beneficiaries did not want to receive a WSB whilst the communities were still coming to terms

with the devastation and they feared being targeted by others in their community for receiving a box when others had nothing.

The Consignment was addressed to this trust so the consignment would clear customs duty free which KAI would not have been able to do. The EBTrust were used to identify the beneficiaries for the WSB. The criteria agreed were:

1. Medical conditions arising from lack of clean drinking water
2. Families identified as living below the poverty line
3. Families with severely damaged homes or completely washed away from the flood water/cyclone
4. Families that had lost their livelihoods due to the flood water/cyclone
5. Targeting the most vulnerable people of the local communities like single mothers, widowers, and the elderly.

Due to these reasons, KAI partnered with a local organisation as they could communicate with local administration who had valuable local knowledge of each area. The team decided to split the consignment with the majority of boxes going to Chikwawa and only 50 boxes to be distributed in Phalombe.

[How did we transport the boxes from the airport to our storage facility?](#)

On the arrival of the WSBs into Blantyre International Airport, the boxes were transported from the hanger and loaded onto a flat-bed truck, stacked on pallets and securely fastened. The WSBs were transported with care and during the day to the Malawi Gurdwara Sahib.



