

Summary

Cyclone Eline struck after widespread flooding. Hundreds of thousands of people have been made homeless in Mozambique's worst flooding in 50 years. It could take years to rebuild the infrastructure damaged by a tropical cyclone and three weeks of severe floods.

9 February

The floods started on 9 February with heavy rainfall across Southern Africa. In South Africa, 26 people were killed while the military had to airlift foreign tourists cut off by floodwaters in Kruger National Park. But southern Mozambique bore the full impact of the rains and rising waters. In the capital, Maputo, tens of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes. The worst-hit were people living in makeshift homes in the slums around the capital. Further north, hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless in Gaza province. Roads, homes, bridges and crops were destroyed. Electricity supplies were disrupted and towns left without clean water supplies after their pumping stations were swept away. Flooding in Sofala made Mozambique's main north-south road impassable, cutting transport links between the capital and the second city, Beira.

11 February

By 11 February more than 70 people are reported to have died in southern Africa as a result of the floods. In Swaziland, the capital, Mbabane, is left without drinking water. Southern Botswana receives 75% of its average annual rainfall in three days as the rains move westwards. As flooding and torrential rain continue, fears grow for the health of those made homeless. United Nations officials say the lives of 150,000 people are in immediate danger from lack of food and disease. Many families in the Limpopo Valley north of Maputo are hit by outbreaks of dysentery. There is severe flood damage when the swollen Limpopo River bursts its banks.

22 February

There is worse to come. On 22 February, the full force of tropical Cyclone Eline hits the Mozambique coast near the central city of Beira - just north of the areas already devastated by the first floods. Winds measure 260km/h (160 mph). By this time some 23,000 people have lost everything, and the South African air force is flying aid to people trapped by floods. Southern Africa normally faces a rainy season at this time of year, but these storms have been unexpectedly heavy.

24 February

Heavy rainfall and swollen rivers in the rest of southern Africa threaten to bring more water into Mozambique, where large parts of the country remain

under water. The U.N. says \$13m is needed for urgent relief supplies and the government asks for more than \$65m to help to rebuild the country's roads, bridges and power supplies.

27 February

Flash floods inundate low farmlands around Chokwe and Xai-Xai in Mozambique.

2 March

Aid workers estimate 100,000 people need to be evacuated and around 7,000 are trapped in trees. Many have been there for several days, without food and water. Floodwater levels are said to have risen from four to eight metres (more than 26 feet) in five days. The international community begins to send in relief workers and helicopters.