



PRESS RELEASE

SADC deploys Emergency Response Team to Madagascar to support disaster response, following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Gezani

17th February 2026, Gaborone, Botswana: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has deployed its Emergency Response Team (ERT) to support the Government of Madagascar following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Gezani, which made landfall on 10 February 2026. This was a second destructive system to hit Madagascar within just ten days, following the impacts of Tropical Cyclone FYTIA which made landfall on 31 January 2026, compounding the crisis. The cyclone resulted in loss of life, significant displacement, destruction of infrastructure and significant disruption to essential services.

The deployment of the SADC ERT forms part of SADC's established regional disaster response mechanisms, which are designed to complement and reinforce Government-led efforts in Member States severely affected by natural disasters. The ERT has been deployed in collaboration with MapAction, Rescue South Africa and the World Food Programme (WFP). The teams will be on the ground in Madagascar from 16 to 28 February 2026, providing technical support to national authorities in emergency response coordination, search and rescue, geospatial expertise to inform decision making, ongoing situation monitoring and the consolidation of a regional humanitarian appeal informed by evolving impact assessments.

Cyclone Gezani developed over the Indian Ocean and intensified prior to making landfall along Madagascar's eastern coastline, bringing heavy rainfall, strong winds, and storm surges that triggered flooding and landslides. These events caused extensive damage to homes, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure. As of 16 February 2026, more than 270,000 people across 18 districts in five regions, namely; Atsinanana, Analamanga, Analanjirofo, Itasy and Alaotra Mangoro have been affected, with reported fatalities. The scale and impact of the cyclone underscore the urgent need for a coordinated, sustained, and well-supported response to address immediate humanitarian needs and support recovery efforts in the affected communities.

In response, the Government of Madagascar has mobilised national response services and, through the National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management, activated humanitarian assistance and specialised response capacities to address the immediate needs of affected populations. The Government further launched an appeal to its regional and international partners to support humanitarian assistance operations and support reconstruction efforts.

At the regional level, the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC), mandated to coordinate disaster preparedness, response and early recovery across the region, is working closely with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs (OCHA) and relevant national disaster management structures to support Government-led response efforts.

Through this deployment, SADC seeks to assist the Government of Madagascar in establishing a comprehensive understanding of the humanitarian situation, existing response capacities, priority needs and to advise on targeted regional interventions. These efforts are intended to ensure an effective, well-coordinated and timely humanitarian response to the impacts of the cyclone and to reinforce regional solidarity in times of crisis.

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SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August, 1992 transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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