DISASTER IN MOZAMBIQUE: FACT SHEET

What happened?

Near midnight on March 14th, 2019, Cyclone Idai made landfall on the coast of central Mozambique.

Cyclones are a familiar fixture of the seasons in southeast Africa, but the ferocity of Idai was startling. 600 people were killed in the storm, and nearly 2 million were displaced, injured, and put in situations of extreme need.

Just five weeks later, Cyclone Kenneth hit the same coast and tore through central Mozambique. Kenneth is the strongest cyclone to ever hit Africa. It is highly unusual for two cyclones to occur in the same season, let alone so close together. The result was utterly devastating.

The total death toll for both these storms in Mozambique and neighboring countries is over 1,000 people. Standing water throughout Mozambique has caused outbreaks of cholera and malaria. The UN has called this "the worst climate disaster in two decades."
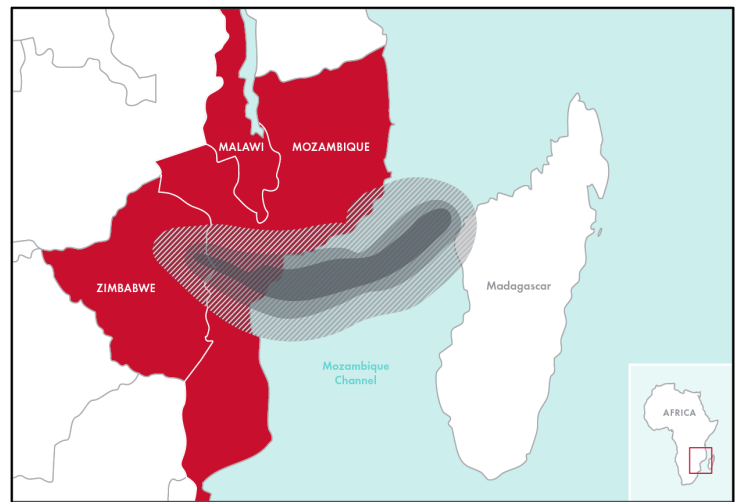
What was the response?

Initially, the international community rallied to the relief effort in Mozambique. But by the time Kenneth hit the coast, donated funds had dried up and the news media had moved on to fresh disasters. Tens of thousands of families remain displaced and in need, and fundraising efforts are still desperately needed to help people rebuild their homes, acquire essential medicines and healthcare, and rebuild infrastructure that will enable them to regain stability and independence from charity.

Climate Change, Poverty, & Black Lives

Storms like Idai and Kenneth are becoming more frequent, devastating, and deadly. This trend is almost certainly the result of climate change. Warming temperatures have increased the intensity of rainfall and rising sea levels have worsened flooding.

The victims of natural disasters around the world are disproportionately people of color, especially poor people of color. As the global climate changes, those natural disasters are bound to become more frequent, intense, and deadly, and poor people of color around the world are going to continue to pay a high price for the relentless industrialization of developed countries like the United States and others. It is not enough to donate money in response to these disasters — we need to do more to address the greed, avarice, and racism that are victimizing whole communities of people all over the world.

The Numbers

- People killed: *1,006*
- People injured: *2,513*
- People displaced: *35,328 families*
- Confirmed cholera cases: *4,979*
- Houses destroyed: *239,682*
- Crops destroyed: *715,378 hectares*
- People affected (total): *3.4 million*

Compiled by Emma Rumney & Alison Williams (via **Huffington Post**)

CREATIVE JUSTICE:
RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS FOR MOZAMBIQUE

What are our youth doing?

Our church's youth have been leading a pledge drive to raise funds that will directly and immediately serve the needs of the people of Mozambique. They asked our congregation to donate based on how many square feet they could paint in a 1-hour mural painting marathon. The finished product will be on display at coffee hour after worship on the nave on **Sunday, June 16ᵗʰ**.

At the same time, our youth have been engaging in education and conversation about environmental racism and our responsibility as Christians and people of conscience as the global climate changes, putting poor people of color all over the world at risk.

What's the point?

Jesus teaches us to be good neighbors. He also teaches us that whomever we love, welcome, and protect, we have been a neighbor to.

Something happens when we extend ourselves emotionally, financially, and physically for the sake of people we will probably never see or meet:

WE CREATE HOPE.

Not a hope that a few good-intentioned people with money can save the world – rather, an anti-cynical hope that love, kindness, and grace really are enough to build a better world. That's how we live into the mustard seed Kingdom of God.

This project is a collaboration of

RIVERSIDE YOUTH,
BLACK LIVES MATTER,
BELOVED EARTH COMMUNTIY,
and **THE MSJ COMMISSION**