



UNICEF MADAGASCAR

Flash Update #1
CYCLONE FYTIA

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Situation Overview

Tropical Cyclone FYTIA made landfall in Soalala District (Boeny Region) in western Madagascar at around 04:00 on 31 January 2026. The cyclone brought strong winds reaching up to 150 km/h, with gusts up to 210 km/h near its centre and moved east-south-east at about 18 km/h. Moderate to heavy rainfall affected the regions of Boeny, northern Melaky, and western Betsiboka, with 50–150 mm of rain falling within 24 hours. This caused widespread flooding, flash floods and landslides, damaging homes, roads, and other infrastructure.

As of 5 February 2026, preliminary reports indicate that 78,376 people have been directly affected, including 31,480 displaced. Housing impacts reported to date include 13,805 flooded homes, 2,212 damaged homes, and 1,952 homes completely destroyed. Because the cyclone first hit Soalala District, impacts in Boeny region have been especially severe, with 56,627 people affected and 22,174 displaced. Reported housing damage in Boeny includes 8,820 flooded homes, 1,715 damaged homes, and 1,645 destroyed. Road access to Soalala remains blocked, making it difficult to reach affected communities.

The education sector in Boeny has been heavily impacted. A total of 357 classrooms have been damaged, including 177 destroyed, forcing many schools to close and disrupting learning for 24,961 students, including 6,945 girls, across the districts of Mahajanga I, Mahajanga II, Mitsinjo, Marovoay, and Ambato-Boeny. Classes remain suspended in several areas, and 15 schools are currently being used as temporary shelters for displaced families.¹

Coordination

The response is being led by the National Office for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC), with UNICEF working closely with government authorities and partners to ensure a coordinated approach. UNICEF participated in a joint aerial assessment with the BNGRC, and partners, supported by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) on Tuesday to monitor the impact of the cyclone from the air and help identify priority needs. Findings are now being reviewed, and partners are working together to prioritise urgent needs and accelerate support to affected communities.

UNICEF Response to Date

Thanks to UNICEF's strong field presence in Boeny, teams were able to respond quickly, working closely with partners to begin supporting affected communities immediately. Actions to date include:

¹ Bulletin Flash n°02_CT FYTIA_03fev2026_20h30_v2.pdf

- Shared early warning messages before the cyclone through SMS, U-Report, and radio and TV broadcasts, reaching over 42,000 people and helping families protect themselves, their homes, and their belongings.
- Supported the establishment of health posts in temporary displacement sites in Mahajanga I, helping displaced families continue to access basic health care and ensuring vulnerable cases were identified and referred early.
- Deployed 72 community outreach workers to share prevention messages on Mpox, child protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene across five displacement sites in Boeny, reaching over 4,500 people and promoting safer behaviours in crowded living conditions.
- Supported the rapid distribution of WASH kits to 8,670 people across accessible affected communities, helping families maintain basic hygiene and reduce the risk of disease after flooding.
- Carried out hygiene promotion and disinfection activities in displacement sites, helping keep shared spaces clean and reduce public health risks.
- Installed and put into use four 2,500-litre water tanks across two displacement sites in Mahajanga, with support from the Urban Commune for regular refilling, ensuring reliable access to safe drinking water for affected households.
- Distributed emergency education kits to 4,400 students and supported temporary learning spaces for 250 children, helping children return to school as quickly as possible.
- Pre-positioned life-saving nutrition supplies (Plumpy'Nut) for March–June 2026 in regions at risk of cyclones including Boeny, Melaky, Betsiboka, Sava, Diana, and Sofia regions (290 cartons), ensuring continuity of treatment for children with severe malnutrition.
- Shared Infant and Young Child Feeding guidance with districts health facilities to ensure clear messaging what type of safe and appropriate nutrition needs to be provided to young children during the emergency and recovery periods.
- Registered and screened displaced children in displacement sites after landfall, enabling early identification of child protection cases, continued treatment, and faster referral to available services.
- Reached 6,800 displaced people, including 1,660 children and 4,550 parents, across eight displacement sites in Mahajanga I with messages on child protection, gender-based violence prevention, and protection from sexual abuse and exploitation, helping communities understand risks and know where to seek support.

UNICEF Planned Response

Following the rapid assessment, UNICEF and partners will undertake more in-depth, multi-sector assessments to identify rehabilitation and reconstruction needs for damaged health and education facilities, water and sanitation systems, and child protection services. This will support a smooth transition from emergency response to early recovery. Planned actions include:

- Deploy four tents to replace four destroyed Basic Health Centres and deliver eight Interagency Emergency Health Kits, providing essential medicines for up to 17,000 people for one month and helping ensure continued access to primary health care.
- Support the deployment of two integrated mobile clinics in Soalala and Ambato-Boeny, improving access to essential services in hard-to-reach and heavily affected areas.
- Provide water, sanitation, and hygiene support to affected health centres and schools, including safe water supply, latrines, and handwashing facilities, to reduce public health risks and enable services to operate safely.

- Support the disinfection of schools used as temporary displacement sites in Mahajanga before classes resume and after families return home, helping reduce infection risks and support safe school reopening.
- Strengthen surveillance of severe acute malnutrition and priority diseases, including diarrhoea, malaria, and Mpox, to enable early detection of risks and faster response in the most affected areas.
- Advocate for the rapid resumption of classes to help children return to learning quickly and reduce the risk of drop-out.
- Deliver additional emergency education supplies to Boeny to support temporary learning spaces and ensure learning continues while damaged schools are rehabilitated or repurposed.
- Strengthen child protection services by deploying emergency child protection specialists to reinforce field capacity and improve identification, referral, and support for children at risk in displacement and affected communities.

Gaps and Challenges

- Access and logistics constraints are making it difficult to deliver supplies and services at scale, especially to the most affected and hard-to-reach communities.
- Multiple, overlapping crises are increasing needs and stretching response capacity, with affected districts already managing the ongoing Mpox situation alongside other health risks linked to flooding.
- Serious funding gaps are limiting how quickly and how widely assistance can be delivered, including critical water and sanitation, health, child protection, and education services.
- Additional resources are urgently needed to support mobile teams, including transport, operating costs, and supplies, so they can reach remote communities, maintain essential services, and identify and refer vulnerable cases early.

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