

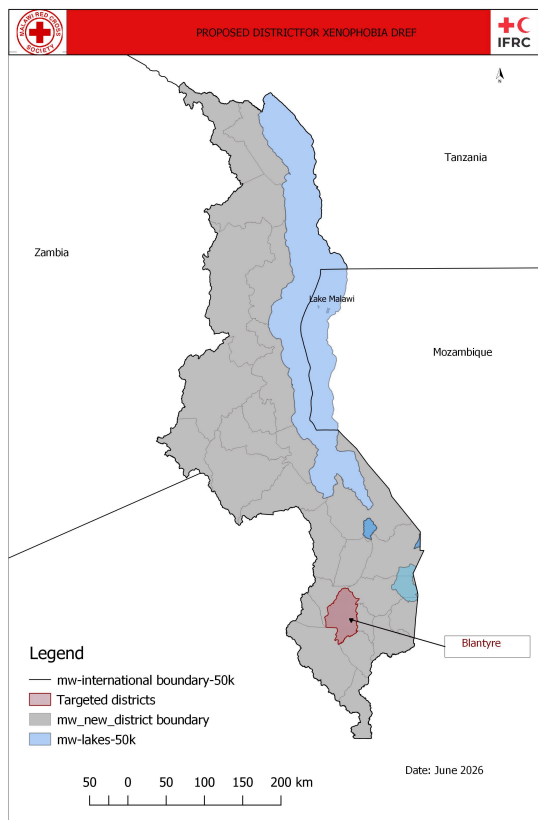


Appeal: MDRMW026	Hazard: Population Movement	Country: Malawi	Type of DREF: Response
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 374,764	
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 9,000 people	People Targeted: 9,000 people	
Operation Start Date: 28-06-2026	Operation Timeframe: 6 months	Operation End Date: 31-12-2026	DREF Published: 02-07-2026
Targeted Regions: Southern Region			

Description of the Event

Date of event

15-06-2026



Proposed district of Operation

What happened, where and when?

Between March and June 2026, South Africa experienced a sharp escalation of localized violence that specifically targeted foreign nationals, including Malawians. The attacks were concentrated in major urban centers such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Mossel Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, and Port Elizabeth, where Malawians were subjected to intimidation, displacement, and loss of access to basic supplies. Reports indicated that by end March more than 3,000 Malawians were in distress, many hiding in homes without food or water, while others sought refuge in temporary shelters such as Sherwood Hall in Durban. The crisis intensified on 6 May 2026 when the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) convened a meeting in Lilongwe to assess the situation, noting that 270 Malawians had already been affected. On the same day, tragedy struck when a bus carrying Malawian Returnees fleeing the attack from South Africa crashed near Kotwa in Zimbabwe, killing 16 passengers and injuring dozens more. The meeting resolved to urgently repatriate Malawians, mobilizing buses, humanitarian support, and coordination with the Malawi High Commission in Pretoria.

The response continued with a follow-up emergency Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting on 7 June 2026, chaired by the Commissioner for Disaster Management Affairs, which focused on preparing for the reception and reintegration of returnees. By this time, 1,101 Malawians were being held at Lindela Repatriation Centre in South Africa, while 150 had already been repatriated from Mossel Bay centre. On 9 June 2026, two buses carrying 154 Malawians arrived in Blantyre, where they were processed and assisted with onward travel to their communities. Subsequent updates revealed that the number of distressed Malawians had risen to over 9,000, prompting the Government to plan the repatriation of 3,600 individuals, with priority given to vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly. On 15th June, the Malawi government through DoDMA made an appeal for financial, logistics and other operational costs which is the trigger for MRCS application for the DREF support. These coordinated actions by DoDMA, the Ministry of



Foreign Affairs, the Malawi Red Cross Society and humanitarian partners marked a structured and urgent response to the developing crisis, ensuring the safe return and reintegration of Malawian nationals.



RFL services provision



RFL services provision



RFL services provision



Beneficiaries making phone calls

Scope and Scale

The violence targeting foreign nationals crisis in South Africa between March and June 2026 has escalated into a full-scale humanitarian emergency for Malawi, producing devastating impacts on lives, livelihoods, well-being, and infrastructure. Escalating insecurity and targeted violence affecting migrant communities in South Africa have triggered a return of Malawian nationals, many of whom arrive with limited resources and require immediate humanitarian assistance. Over 9,000 Malawian nationals have registered for voluntary repatriation, with 1,101 detained at Lindela Repatriation Centre, while thousands more remain stranded in overcrowded waiting centres where food, sleeping space, and access to basic needs are critically limited. Many Malawians have lost property, been beaten severely, and are suffering trauma, leaving them vulnerable to long-term psychosocial distress. Tragically, the crisis has already claimed lives, including those killed in a bus accident while fleeing Violence targeting foreign nationals. The impacts are most acute for vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and people with disabilities, who face heightened risks due to limited mobility, dependency on caregivers, and lack of access to specialized services. Children are particularly exposed to malnutrition, disrupted education, and psychological harm, while women face risks of gender-based violence and exploitation in shelters. Elderly returnees struggle with health complications and mobility challenges, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the absence of inclusive facilities. These groups, living in both urban hotspots of South Africa such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Mossel Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, and Port Elizabeth, and temporary reception sites in Malawi such as Mwanza Border Post and Kamuzu Stadium, are especially vulnerable because of overcrowding, inadequate supplies, and exposure to cold winter weather. The Malawi Red Cross Society has deployed its National Response Team to provide health screening, psychosocial support, family tracing, and logistics, but the scale of needs has left the national society severely resource constrained. At Kamuzu Stadium, where returnees are received and screened before onward travel, conditions remain dire: shortages of food, bedding, dignity kits, and mental health services compound the suffering of already traumatized returnees. The Government of Malawi, through DoDMA and partners, is coordinating large-scale repatriation but faces

serious financial and logistical challenges, including limited transport capacity and insufficient supplies. An all-inclusive budget of USD 2.5 million (MK 4.5 billion) has been developed but remains underfunded, leaving critical gaps in operational support. Historically, Malawi has faced similar challenges during past Violence targeting foreign nationals-related crises, such as in 2015 when Malawians were repatriated from South Africa following violent attacks. Lessons from that experience highlight the recurring nature of Violence targeting foreign nationals as a violent social phenomenon that produces systemic humanitarian emergencies requiring urgent cross-border coordination, sustained resource mobilization, and long-term reintegration support for returnees.

Source Name	Source Link
1. DoDMA	https://malawiredcross-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/rkufandiko_redcross_mw/IQC GmmHQYDcSSKdeY9wysuuPAWMaFEDKr_g-NVv0blqBOD0?e=DGFOE1
2. DoDMA	https://malawiredcross-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/rkufandiko_redcross_mw/IQDin8r_IQdQR7q7hup3PoXjAWe47g7UyZhbWQ-ykZ-mjVk?e=Ah2lkq

Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	No
Did it affect the same population group?	-
Did the National Society respond?	-
Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	-
If yes, please specify which operation	-

If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent:

-



Lessons learned:

When Malawi previously received returnees from South Africa in 2015 due to Violence targeting foreign nationals, the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) played a central role in supporting the humanitarian response. Several lessons were drawn from that operation which remain highly relevant today. Firstly, the timely provision of Restoring Family Links (RFL) services and transport for arrivals helped decongest reception centres and created more space for incoming returnees. Secondly, training volunteers on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHSSP) and RFL ensured that MRCS was able to deploy quickly and provide essential services on the ground. Another critical lesson was that availability of funding through IFRC DREF acted as a catalyst for the entire humanitarian response. At one point, when other humanitarian actors had to withdraw due to resource constraints, MRCS continued to provide services until the operation was formally closed, ensuring continuity of care for vulnerable groups.

These experiences demonstrated that early resource mobilization, volunteer capacity building, and sustained funding are indispensable for effective humanitarian action. In the current 2026 Violence targeting foreign nationals crisis, MRCS is applying these lessons to strengthen its delivery: ensuring volunteers are trained and ready, advocating for timely funding to avoid operational gaps, and prioritizing transport and RFL services to manage congestion at reception points. By leveraging the lessons from 2015, MRCS is better positioned to navigate the financial, logistical, and operational challenges of the ongoing crisis, thereby improving the NS effectiveness of its humanitarian response.

Did you complete the Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis in previous operations, what was risk level?

No

What was the risk level for Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis?:

Low risk

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

07-06-2026

Shelter, Housing And Settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blankets and sleeping mats were distributed to improve living conditions. The Society also supported shelter management at Kamuzu Stadium by allocating families to tents, ensuring orderly occupancy, monitoring shelter conditions, and safeguarding welfare within the camp setting.Reception sites were organized, and returnees were advised on available services. This ensured smooth coordination and access to essential support within the camps.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health education services were delivered, reaching 541 people with messages on the importance of using mosquito nets and maintaining personal hygiene. Additionally, psychosocial support was provided to help individuals and families cope with trauma, stress, and anxiety resulting from displacement and Violence targeting foreign nationals. First Aid services were also offered to address immediate medical needs, with referrals made where necessary.
Water, Sanitation And Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In the area of water and sanitation, dignity kits were provided to 300 returnees. These kits supported personal hygiene and helped restore dignity among affected populations, particularly vulnerable groups.
Protection, Gender And Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public awareness campaigns were conducted to highlight the dangers of gender-based violence. Psychosocial support services were also extended to individuals and families to help them manage emotional and psychological challenges.
Migration And Displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through the RFL programme, free phone calls were facilitated for affected individuals to reconnect with loved ones locally and internationally, ensuring



	communication and reassurance of safety.
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On behalf of DoDMA, the Malawi Red Cross Society chaired and facilitated stakeholder coordination meetings involving government departments, humanitarian organizations, and partners. This strengthened response planning, service delivery, and information sharing, while also helping to identify emerging needs among the affected population.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Society conducted thorough needs assessments to identify priority requirements among returnees. This informed the distribution of essential items and guided service delivery across multiple sectors.
Other	<p>Relief and Supply Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential relief items, including NFIs, were distributed to affected households. This was complemented by logistical support such as provision of tables and chairs to service providers, lunch and transport refunds for volunteers, and fuel support for stakeholders like Police and District Health Office.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>IFRC Harare Country Delegation office has been providing critical technical and strategic support to the National Society in the development of the operational rationale for this response.</p> <p>Through the cluster, the National Society is implementing other projects and operations including the Food Insecurity response, Floods Response, and the Empowering Local Health Systems and Human Capital for Climate Resilience in Malawi. With the strategic leadership of the Head of Delegation, technically by the Coordinator, Programs and Operations, the CCD has more support team including Finance, NSD, Procurement, PMER IM and Communications team.</p> <p>This consolidated support has been vital in enabling MRCS to develop this response to deliver health screening, psychosocial support, family tracing, and logistics at reception points such as Mwanza Border Post and Kamuzu Stadium, despite severe resource constraints. It has also reinforced domestic coordination led by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), ensuring that the large-scale repatriation of Malawians is backed by regional expertise and structured operational guidance.</p>
Participating National Societies	<p>In this operation, Malawi is being supported by the Danish Red Cross as the key Participating National Society (PNS). The Danish Red Cross has been actively engaged both on the ground and remotely, contributing through movement coordination meetings and providing specialized technical support on mental health issues to the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS). This role is particularly critical given the scale of trauma experienced by returnees who have suffered violence, displacement, and loss during the Violence targeting foreign nationals crisis. However, currently no partner is financially supporting this yet.</p>

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is not present in Malawi; however, it has played an important role in capacitating the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) in Restoring Family Links. Through this program, ICRC has trained MRCS staff and volunteers in



family tracing and reconnection services, which are critical during displacement and repatriation emergencies. The trained personnel supported by ICRC are the very ones now deployed to assist in the response, providing essential services such as tracing separated family members, reconnecting distressed individuals with their relatives, and ensuring that vulnerable groups particularly children, women, and the elderly are not left isolated during the repatriation and reintegration process.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

<p>Government has requested international assistance</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>National authorities</p>	<p>In this Violence targeting foreign nationals' crisis, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have played central roles in coordinating Malawi's national response. On 6 May 2026, DoDMA convened a high-level meeting in Lilongwe to assess the situation, noting that hundreds of Malawians had already been affected and tragically highlighting the bus crash near Kotwa, Zimbabwe, which killed 16 refugees fleeing the crisis. DoDMA resolved to urgently repatriate Malawians, mobilizing buses, humanitarian support, and coordination with the Malawi High Commission in Pretoria. This was followed by an emergency Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting on 7 June 2026, chaired by the Commissioner for Disaster Management Affairs, to prepare for the reception and reintegration of returnees. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been instrumental in diplomatic coordination, working closely with the Malawi High Commission in Pretoria to liaise with South African authorities, monitor detained Malawians at Lindela Repatriation Centre, and facilitate safe passage for those repatriated. Together, DoDMA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs facilitated the structured repatriation process, prioritizing vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly.</p>
<p>UN or other actors</p>	<p>In this crisis response, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has played a central role, working closely with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate safe repatriation and reintegration of Malawians. IOM has provided technical guidance on cross-border coordination, logistical support for transport mobilization, and management of reception centres, ensuring that vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are prioritized. Alongside IOM, other UN agencies have participated in the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) to reinforce the government-led response. UNICEF has focused on child protection; WHO has coordinated health screening and emergency medical services at reception sites.</p>



Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

At the national level, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) has activated the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), which in turn mobilized related clusters to support the response. These cluster meetings provide technical guidance on sector-specific issues such as health, shelter, protection, and logistics, ensuring that humanitarian action is coordinated across government, UN agencies, and partners. In Blantyre at the Reception camp, coordination mechanisms include daily briefing meetings at the reception centre in Blantyre, where operational updates are shared among agencies to manage the immediate needs of returnees. The Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) is strongly positioned within these mechanisms, serving as co-lead in the shelter cluster, the sole provider of Restoring Family Links tracing services, and the lead agency responsible for all distributions at the reception centre. This places MRCS at the heart of both national and local coordination, bridging technical support from clusters with direct service delivery to affected populations. While coordination has been robust, gaps remain in areas such as mental health and psychosocial support, where services are limited, and overlaps have been noted in logistics planning, requiring clearer delineation of roles. Overall, the coordination platforms such as national ICCG meetings, sectoral cluster meetings, and local daily briefings have provided structured engagement, but sustained resource mobilization and strengthened technical capacity are needed to close gaps and ensure comprehensive coverage of all humanitarian sectors.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

There are serious resource shortages in tents, temporary shelters, bedding, dignity kits, and health kits at Kamuzu Stadium. Food and WASH facilities remain inadequate, leaving returnees exposed to cold winter conditions. Operational challenges include overcrowding and limited storage/distr. Vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected, with their specific needs not fully addressed. Required actions: scale up shelter deployment, provide NFIs to such as sleeping mats, blankets and bedsheets which will be provided to the returnees and will be left with them as part of their return home package.



Multi purpose cash grants

Funding gaps have significantly limited the rollout of cash grants, leaving families unable to meet immediate needs such as food, shelter, and essential supplies upon arrival. Vulnerable groups particularly women, children, and the elderly are most affected, as they often lack alternative coping mechanisms. Provision of unconditional cash at reception centres, where shops are available for returnees to purchase necessities; allocation of cash as a return package to support reintegration into their homes; and inclusion of transport funds to ensure safe onward travel. These measures would reduce dependency on overstretched relief supplies, empower returnees to meet their own priorities, and lower the risk of re-migration.



Health

Health screening at Mwanza Border and Kamuzu Stadium is constrained by shortages of medical staff, supplies, and equipment. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHSSP) services are severely under-resourced, leaving trauma largely unaddressed. Vulnerable groups such as children, women, elderly, and those with chronic conditions are not receiving adequate care. Required actions: deploy more health staff and volunteers, deploy first aid volunteers, scale up MHSSP services, and strengthen referral pathways for vulnerable groups.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

The assessment highlights significant gaps in PGI support during the response. Resource shortages include limited safe spaces for women and girls, inadequate dignity kits, and insufficient psychosocial support services. Reception centres remain overcrowded, with such as lack of trained volunteers in PGI and weak referral pathways for survivors of gender-based violence or trauma, limited integration of PGI into cluster meetings, leaving gaps in protection monitoring and accountability To address these gaps, MRCS will establish safe spaces for women and girls at reception centres, ensure gender-sensitive distributions of dignity kits and food, and conduct awareness sessions to



reduce risks of exploitation. Strengthening family tracing and reunification through Restoring Family Links (RFL) help desks and hotlines are also critical, provision of psychosocial support services with trained volunteers to address trauma among vulnerable groups.

Lesson Learnt workshop outcomes.

Despite lessons from the 2015 xenophobia response, gaps remain in timely provision of Restoring Family Links (RFL) and transport services. Volunteer training on MHSSP and RFL has not been scaled up adequately, limiting rapid deployment. Early resource mobilization has been slow, leaving operations underfunded. Required actions: accelerate volunteer training, ensure early deployment of RFL services, and advocate for faster resource mobilization.



Migration And Displacement

The migration crisis has generated significant humanitarian needs among Malawian returnees, many of whom are women who migrated irregularly to South Africa in search of income opportunities or to join family members. Some returnees report experience of violence, detention, displacement, loss of assets, and prolonged stays in unsafe conditions before returning to Malawi.

The majority of returnees are women who migrated irregularly to South Africa in search of informal work opportunities and also following their husbands there. They are female-headed, economically vulnerable, and have limited access to protection services and sustainable livelihood opportunities. These experiences have increased exposure to trauma, protection risks, and social and economic insecurity. As single-headed and economically vulnerable, these returnees have limited access to protection services and livelihood options. Their experiences of irregular migration and displacement have heightened exposure to exploitation, insecurity, and trauma, underscoring the need for tailored support that integrates protection, gender, and inclusion measures alongside livelihood recovery.

For now, the reception centers remain open, at least until July 2026, subject to changes. At reception centres, returnees require immediate protection and assistance, including registration, reception support, family tracing and reunification services, access to communication facilities to contact relatives, and referral mechanisms for vulnerable and separated individuals. Many arrive in need of psychosocial support due to the distress associated with violence, displacement, and family separation. Vulnerable groups, including children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and chronically ill individuals, require targeted protection services and appropriate referral pathways.

Beyond the reception phase, returnees may face substantial reintegration challenges. Many have returned without resources, livelihoods, or social support networks and require assistance to meet basic needs and rebuild their lives. Continued protection monitoring, psychosocial follow-up, family reunification support, and linkage to social welfare services and livelihood assistance will be sustained needs to facilitate safe and dignified reintegration. Economic support is particularly important to reduce vulnerability and mitigate the risk of negative coping mechanisms, including re-migration.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

The Violence targeting foreign nationals crisis has exposed major humanitarian gaps in Malawi's response, with urgent needs across shelter, food, WASH, health, psychosocial support, transport, cash assistance, and coordination. Despite efforts by DoDMA, MRCS, and partners, overcrowded reception centres, limited supplies, and funding shortages continue to leave vulnerable groups—children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities at heightened risk. Lessons from the 2015 response emphasize the importance of timely Restoring Family Links, volunteer training, and early resource mobilization, yet these remain under-addressed. Strengthening coordination, scaling up resources, and prioritizing vulnerable groups are critical to ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive humanitarian response.

Coordination Support

DoDMA has activated ICG meetings and clusters, but gaps persist in technical areas such as MHSSP and logistics. Daily briefings at Blantyre reception centre provide updates, but information sharing across clusters is uneven. MRCS is co-lead in shelter, sole provider of tracing services, and lead for distributions, yet overlaps in logistics planning and gaps in psychosocial support coordination remain. Required actions: strengthen inter-cluster coordination, clarify logistics roles, and mobilize technical partners to fill sectoral gaps.

[Assessment Report](#)



Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The primary objective of this emergency operation is to ensure the dignified reception, protection, and reintegration of Malawian returnees affected by Violence targeting foreign nationals in South Africa. The operation seeks to address their most urgent humanitarian needs upon arrival shelter, food, WASH, health, psychosocial support, and cash assistance.

Operation strategy rationale

The overall plan for this emergency operation is built around ensuring dignified reception, protection, and reintegration of Malawian returnees affected by Violence targeting foreign nationals in South Africa. The strategy is deliberately shaped to respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs identified in the assessment, while also applying lessons learned from the 2015 Violence targeting foreign nationals response to strengthen sustainability and resilience.

The operation prioritizes shelter and WASH, cash assistance, health and psychosocial support and safe reception and transport. These priorities were chosen because overcrowded reception centres, limited supplies, and funding shortages have left returnees exposed to poor conditions, while trauma and psychosocial needs remain largely unmet.

Shelter Assistance:

The procurement and distribution of 250 blankets is planned to meet the immediate needs of displaced Malawian returnees affected by the violence against foreign nationals in Southern Africa. Many affected individuals arrive with little or no personal belongings and are hosted in temporary shelters. Blankets will provide essential warmth, protection, and dignity, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly, in line with IFRC emergency standards. The prioritization of Shelter NFIs under the Malawi DREF response has been guided by both the scale of need and the limitations of available resources. Out of the total affected population of approximately 9,000, only 250 households were targeted for NFIs due to resource constraints. The rationale for this prioritization is to ensure that the most vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating mothers, women with children, the sick, and elderly returnees will receive immediate support to safeguard their dignity and wellbeing. While the demand for NFIs remains very high, and the government has publicly appealed for additional supplies, the current allocation reflects a balance between available resources and urgent humanitarian needs. The desire is to reach more households, but given the limited stock, MRCS will apply vulnerability-based targeting criteria (such as pregnant women, people living with disability, those with young children, elderly) to maximize impact and ensure that those at greatest risk are prioritized for shelter support. This approach aligns with humanitarian principles of equity and prioritization in resource-constrained settings.

Multipurpose Cash Assistance:

MRCS plans to provide cash assistance to 2,500 households affected by the violence against foreign nationals in south Africa displacement, enabling families to meet urgent needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and transport. Cash support offers flexibility, preserves dignity, and stimulates local markets while prioritizing vulnerable groups. This intervention supports immediate relief and early recovery, aligned with IFRC cash and voucher assistance standards. The cash transfer amount of MWK 150,000 was determined based on the existing national support framework for households affected by floods and the lean season. The Government of Malawi has established the food basket cost at MWK 90,000, which covers essential food needs for a household during the lean period per month. To ensure that returnees can better settle into their communities and meet additional basic needs beyond food, an extra MWK 60,000 has been added. This brings the total transfer to MWK 150,000 per household. Two modalities will be used as follows: -

1. If the NS receive funding from IFRC while the returnees are still transiting to Malawi then Cash in envelopes will be used.
2. If the funds will be received after all the returnees have reached their onward destinations, then either mobile money will be used while for those who might be more in a location, the national society shall follow them with cash in envelopes.

MRCS already has an agreement with FSPs, one of them will be assigned to support the action.

Onsite monitoring will be done by the NS while once the returnees move to their respective districts, the Social welfare offices will work with the volunteers to monitor them. The recipients will travel back to their respective districts which are many. In some of these districts, MRCS does not have the means to move and follow up and hence will work hand in hand with the social welfare committees. The Social welfare offices will work with our branches to support the returnees since they have vehicles to support the mobility.

In this operation Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) prioritizes a single, standardized cash delivery mechanism will strengthen accountability, transparency, and financial controls throughout the operation. Therefore, the multipurpose cash assistance will be provided at designated reception and registration sites prior to beneficiaries departing for their final destinations through controlled cash-in-envelope distributions. Based on the anticipated context of the operation, this modality is considered the most practical and reliable approach, as many returnees may not have access to registered mobile money accounts, mobile phones, or stable network



connectivity. Previous emergency operations have also demonstrated that mobile money transfers can be affected by network outages, transaction delays, and beneficiary identification challenges, which may hinder timely assistance.

Under the proposed approach, selected beneficiaries especially pregnant women, returnees with children under 5 years, chronically ill, will undergo registration, verification, and validation at the reception sites before receiving assistance. Cash disbursements will be conducted in accordance with MRCS and IFRC Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) procedures, including segregation of duties, beneficiary verification, signed distribution records, reconciliation processes, post-distribution monitoring, and robust financial oversight mechanisms.

The MRCS Cash and Voucher Assistance Team will review and validate the final distribution procedures to ensure full compliance with IFRC cash programming standards and risk management requirements.

Health:
Health screening and MHSSP services are prioritized to protect vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities whose needs are often overlooked in emergencies. The health activities within this operation will largely focus on two priority areas: hygiene promotion and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). This approach reflects both the immediate needs of the returnees and the operational context, as the displaced population will only remain at the reception sites for a few days. Given this short duration, the National Society will not have sufficient time to implement a broader range of health interventions. Hygiene promotion will help reduce the risk of communicable diseases in the temporary camp setting, while MHPSS will provide essential support to individuals and families coping with trauma, stress, and anxiety resulting from displacement and xenophobic attacks. By concentrating on these two areas, MRCS ensures that the most urgent health risks are addressed effectively within the limited timeframe.

WASH:
WASH will only focus on provision of hygiene kits. The NS will have no time to undertake a bigger WASH set of activities due the operational context. However, WASH messaging will be embedded in the hygiene promotion messaging. The hygiene promotion messages will emphasize simple, practical actions that reduce the spread of disease and maintain dignity in shared spaces. Volunteers will be reminded to wash hands with soap after using latrines, before eating, and when caring for children or sick individuals. Volunteers will also encourage Safe water practices, including using covered containers, encouraging them thorough cooking and covering food to protect against flies. Waste management and vector control are equally important, with communities urged to dispose of solid waste properly. MRCS volunteers will also strengthen hygiene promotion activities at points of entry to strengthen community awareness on hand hygiene, safe water handling, and sanitation practices, thereby reducing the risk of disease transmission. With support of the Ministry of Health MRCS will intensify Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS) interventions, accompanied by the provision of household water treatment chemicals to ensure access to safe drinking water and reduce the risk of waterborne diseases. This will be through distribution of chlorine to the returnees.

Migration:
Reception-centre support and direct assistance to returnees will be driven by the movement and arrival patterns of affected individuals. NS will be monitoring assistance at reception center level. All the planned activities will target returnees at reception center through immediate assistance activities but also within their districts of origin with subsequent months focusing on follow-up, protection monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, accountability activities, and reporting. So far MRCS is offering the following services at the reception sites:

- Registration of tracing requests.
- Family contact and messaging services.
- Coordination with relevant in South Africa where needed.
- Support for family reunification where feasible and appropriate.
- Referral pathways for vulnerable and separated individuals.

MRCS acknowledges the Government's request for Restoring Family Links (RFL), tracing, and family reunification support. These services are being offered right at the reception center as they are considered a critical protection intervention for vulnerable returnees, particularly unaccompanied or separated children, older persons, and individuals who may lose contact with family members during displacement and repatriation. By embedding Restoring Family Links (RFL), volunteer training, and early resource mobilization into the plan, the operation ensures that gaps and learnings identified in past responses are addressed. Coordination through ICCG meetings and daily briefings at reception centres strengthens technical support across clusters, while MRCS's role as co-lead in shelter and sole provider of tracing services ensures accountability and inclusion. MRCS will procure phones and solar chargers for tracing services, support volunteers with meals, and distribute RFL visibility materials to enhance communication, service delivery, and awareness at reception centres. MRCS will also provide connectivity services (wifi/mobile modem) since many returnees will usually carry their phones and wish to use internet to connect with their loved ones.

Community Engagement and Accountability:
MRCS will support returnees through dialogue with authorities and establish feedback and complaints mechanisms at reception centres to strengthen coordination, accountability, and service quality.



PGI:

MRCS will orient 50 volunteers on gender-based violence (GBV), referral pathways, and psychosocial support (PSS). These volunteers will conduct sessions with all recipients on protection issues and cash security. For those with mobile phones, volunteers will encourage safe practices such as depositing to mobile money. All recipients will be linked with district social welfare offices, which are responsible for protection services in their localities, and beneficiaries will also be connected to volunteers for follow-up support.

The PGI activities will include:

- Ensuring safe spaces for women, children, and vulnerable groups.
- Delivering dignity kits and essential non-food items to uphold hygiene and privacy.
- Conducting awareness sessions on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- Establishing complaint and feedback mechanisms to strengthen accountability.
- Providing psychosocial support to individuals experiencing stress or trauma during displacement.

Key factors influencing this strategy include resource constraints, which necessitate prioritization of cash-based interventions ensuring that returnees are received with dignity, protected from harm, and supported to rebuild their lives.

This rationale positions the response as both emergency focused and resilience-oriented ensuring that humanitarian impact is maximized while laying the groundwork for sustainable recovery.

The six-month operational timeframe is intended to provide sufficient flexibility for response, monitoring, and reporting. However, reception-centre support and direct assistance to returnees will be driven by the movement and arrival patterns of affected individuals.

Government of Malawi is planning to conclude all activities within reception centres by end of July 2026 dependent on the period during which returnees are arriving and require reception support. MRCS position is that all the planned activities will target returnees at reception center through immediate assistance activities but also within their districts of origin with subsequent months focusing on follow-up, protection monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, accountability activities, and reporting.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

The operation will primarily target Malawian returnees affected by Violence targeting foreign nationals in South Africa with a strong focus on ensuring their dignified reception, protection, and reintegration. Within this broad group, the strategy emphasizes vulnerable populations including women children, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities and returnees who will arrive at the reception center while sick because these groups face heightened risks of exploitation, neglect, and exclusion in this type of humanitarian crisis. To date we have not received information of the possibility of other affected nationals ending up in Malawi as refugees. If we do we shall provide the same through an operation update.

Targeting will be achieved through inclusive approaches such as Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms (help desks, hotlines, feedback systems), protection monitoring to identify risks of abuse or neglect, and cash assistance that empowers returnees to meet their own needs. The Malawi Government will allocate the NS a set of buses carrying returnees to support until all the 2500 returnees are covered/supported while for the NFIs, only the most vulnerable groups will be supported. This include pregnant and lactating mothers, women with children, the elderly and the sick

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The operation will target Malawian returnees affected by Violence targeting foreign nationals in South Africa with a deliberate focus on those arriving through reception centres such as Kamuzu Stadium and Mwanza Border. The selection criteria are based on the principle of addressing the most urgent humanitarian needs while prioritizing vulnerable groups who face heightened risks in these types of emergencies

The primary logic behind targeting returnees is that they are directly impacted by displacement, loss of livelihoods, and trauma, requiring immediate humanitarian support for dignified reception and reintegration. Within this group, women, children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities are prioritized because they are disproportionately affected by overcrowding, lack of shelter, inadequate health services, and risks of exploitation or neglect.

Specifically, Women and girls will be targeted through safe spaces, gender-sensitive distributions of dignity kits, and awareness sessions to reduce risks of gender-based violence while Children will be supported family tracing and reunification via Restoring Family Links (RFL), and access to psychosocial support as the Elderly persons and persons with disabilities will be prioritized in health screening and



trauma-affected individuals will be targeted through expanded Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHSSP) services and referral pathways.

Total Targeted Population

Women	4,336	Rural	-
Girls (under 18)	138	Urban	-
Men	4,410	People with disabilities (estimated)	1%
Boys (under 18)	116		
Total targeted population	9,000		

Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	Yes

Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.

Risk	Mitigation action
<p>Potential Risk 1: Overcrowding at Kamuzu Stadium and Mwanza Border leading to inadequate shelter, WASH, and health services.</p> <p>Potential Risk 2: Delayed transfer of funds limiting commencement of cash assistance and essential supplies.</p> <p>Potential Risk 3: Perception of inadequate or inequitable support to vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Risk 1: Scale up tents, bedding, and WASH facilities; strengthen logistics planning; deploy additional volunteers trained in PGI and MHSSP.</p> <p>Risk 2: Advocate for early resource mobilization, diversify funding sources, and prioritize unconditional cash transfers to maximize impact with limited resources.</p> <p>Risk 3: Ensure gender-sensitive distributions, establish safe spaces, and strengthen Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms to capture feedback.</p>



Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:

There are no anticipated major security or operational risks for this emergency operation, as the areas of implementation Kamuzu Stadium, Mwanza Border, and onward travel routes are not conflict zones and do not present high-crime threats. However, given the scale of returnee influx and the emergency nature of the response, several foreseeable operational and safety risks must be considered to safeguard personnel, volunteers, and communities.

- Crowd Management Risks: Overcrowded reception centres may lead to congestion, stampedes, or tensions among returnees.
- Transport Safety Risks: Limited buses and weak safety inspections could expose returnees and volunteers to accidents during onward travel.
- Health Risks: High population density at reception centres increases exposure to communicable diseases, while cold weather conditions heighten risks of respiratory infections.
- Volunteer Safety Risks: Volunteers may face fatigue, stress, or secondary trauma when providing psychosocial support without adequate rest or supervision.

Security Protocols and Measures:

- Crowd control protocols: Deploy trained volunteers and coordinate with police/security agencies to manage large groups safely.
- Transport safety measures: Enforce bus safety inspections, ensure drivers are briefed, and stagger departures to reduce congestion.
- Health and hygiene protocols: Provide handwashing stations, masks, and health screening to minimize disease spread.
- Volunteer protection measures: Rotate shifts, provide psychosocial support to staff, and ensure volunteers have protective gear and insurance coverage.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

Planned Intervention



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 25,365

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of needs assessments conducted	1
# of people reached with NFIs	250

Priority Actions

- Conduct detailed needs assessment to establish the current needs of the returnees.
- Procure 250 Sleeping Mats
- Procure 250 Blankets
- Procure 50 Bibs



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 230,498

Targeted Persons: 2,500



Indicators

Title	Target
# of returnees supported with cash	2,500
# of inception and exit meetings conducted	2
# of NDRT deployments	3
% of monitored households reporting safe and intended use of cash assistance	90

Priority Actions

- Conduct CVA awareness information.
- Documentation of beneficiary list.
- Provision of once off multi-purpose cash to 2500 households @ Mk 150000 take home.
- Payment to FSP distributing cash 6%.
- Deployment of volunteers to cash distributions.
- Support response Inception and exit meetings.
- District technical facilitation by NDRT members.
- Monitoring by Social welfare (This is the financial support which will be provided to the districts to assist the social welfare officers to follow up on the recipients to check on their protection, security and utilization of the cash as MRCS may not be able to undertake a PDM in this context).



Budget: CHF 6,859

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of volunteers oriented on Mental Health and Psychosocial support	50
# of people reached with hygiene promotion activities	9,000

Priority Actions

- Support 50 volunteers to conduct hygiene promotion activities.
- Orient 50 volunteers on Mental Health and Psychosocial support.



Budget: CHF 4,899

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of returnees supported with Hygiene and or Dignity Kits	1,000
# of people reached with WASH related activities and messaging such as hand washing with soap	9,000

Priority Actions

- Procure 1000 Hygiene and or Dignity Kits.
- Conduct hygiene promotion to all the returnees.
- Promote hand WASH at the reception centre and point of entry by the volunteers.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 4,899

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of volunteers trained on n Gender based violence, referral pathways and PSS support	50
# of returnees reached with Protection, Gender and Inclusion messaging	9,000

Priority Actions

- Conduct orientation of 50 volunteers in Gender based violence, referral pathways and PSS support as well as Supporting Awareness.
- Disseminate Protection, Gender and Inclusion including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse messages to the returnees.



Migration And Displacement

Budget: CHF 12,272

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of phones procured	3
# of RFL visibility materials procured and distributed	10
# of returnees reached with services for assistance and protection	9,000



Priority Actions

- Procurement of Phones for Tracing services at the reception Centre.
- Provision of phone solar charging gadgets.
- Support volunteers with meals at the reception Centre.
- Procure and distribute RFL visibility materials.
- Support deployment of RFL NDTRs to support the activities.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 10,778

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
% of feedback received and addressed	100

Priority Actions

- Facilitate dialogue with authorities to onward returnee destinations.
- Support establishment and management of feedback and Complaints mechanism at the Reception Centre.



Coordination And Partnerships

Budget: CHF 18,126

Targeted Persons: 9,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of monitoring visits conducted	2
# of lessons learnt workshops conducted	1

Priority Actions

- Monitoring MRCS and Government.
- Lessons Learnt Workshop.
- Media Documentation - Distributions of shelter items.
- Profiling and documentary of the operation.
- Securing media interview slots.
- Blue Tooth Speakers and Sound Mixer for Public Address for communication Department.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 15,848



Targeted Persons: 10

Indicators

Title	Target
# of IFRC CCD monitoring visits conducted and field reports shared	2
# of Kick off meeting held within 7 days of DREF approval	1

Priority Actions

- Ensure overall operational coordination in line with IFRC DREF standards and policies.
- Convene a kickoff meeting within one week of approval and conduct monthly operational coordination meetings thereafter.
- Cover salary costs for essential strategic positions required for effective operation delivery. PMER Officer and Project Officer.
- Provide technical and coordination support through the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD), including PMER, finance, and logistics, in compliance with DREF and IFRC policies.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 45,220

Targeted Persons: 10

Indicators

Title	Target
# of media equipment procured	2

Priority Actions

- Stationery
- Office Rent Blantyre
- Internet And Airtime
- Vehicle Hire
- Stand-alone MRCS Backdrop Banner AND Tier Flier
- Bank Charges
- Vehicle service
- MRCS Salaries 4% - of Direct Costs (The Head of DM, the Fundraising and Partnership Coordinator, the Finance and Admin Coordinator, 1 District Manager and a driver)
- MRCS Admin costs 5%

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

The Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) will mobilize a total of 115 personnel to support this emergency operation. This includes 100 volunteers and 15 staff members, each with clearly defined roles to ensure effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.



These will be deployed across key sectors Shelter, WASH, Health, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and Tracing services. Their responsibilities will include crowd management at reception centres, distribution of dignity kits and relief supplies, health screening, psychosocial support, facilitation of safe spaces, and family tracing through Restoring Family Links (RFL).

MRCS staff will provide technical oversight and coordination across all operational aspects. Their roles will include supervising volunteer teams, managing logistics and transport, ensuring PGI integration, overseeing cash assistance programs, and coordinating with government and humanitarian partners. Staff will also lead monitoring and reporting to ensure accountability and quality assurance.

Does your volunteer team reflect the gender, age, and cultural diversity of the people you're helping? What gaps exist in your volunteer team's gender, age, or cultural diversity, and how are you addressing them to ensure inclusive and appropriate support?

Yes, the MRCS volunteer team engaged in this operation reflects the gender, age, and cultural diversity of the returnees being supported. The team includes both male and female volunteers, ensuring that women and girls are particularly comfortable in the environment in which they will be supported as well as when receiving assistance. Younger volunteers bring energy and adaptability, while older volunteers contribute experience and maturity, creating a balanced team dynamic.

Cultural and linguistic diversity is also represented, with volunteers drawn as these are city volunteers and include from different cultures and languages. This allows them to communicate effectively with returnees in local languages and cultural contexts, building trust and ensuring that messages are delivered in ways that resonate with affected returnees which is important in Engagement and Accountability activities, where feedback and dialogue depend on mutual understanding.

If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

NS will do the procurement and will be for replenishment. MRCS already has an agreement with the Financial Service Provider.

How will this operation be monitored?

The Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) will monitor the operation through its Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) framework, ensuring accountability and effectiveness across all thematic areas. Field monitoring teams will be deployed to Kamuzu Stadium and reception sites to observe distributions, shelter management, and service delivery in real time, while standardized activity tracking tools such as distribution lists and attendance registers will capture quantitative data. Daily coordination meetings with stakeholders will provide qualitative insights and identify emerging needs. Progress will be tracked by MRCS branch staff at the frontline, consolidated by the PMER unit, and validated by operation leadership, with indicators including the number of households receiving NFIs, people reached with health education, psychosocial support sessions conducted, RFL calls facilitated, and coordination meetings chaired. Milestones will be assessed against planned objectives, with situation reports shared regularly. IFRC will conduct joint monitoring visits at key stages of the operation to provide technical support and ensure adherence to humanitarian standards, thereby reinforcing oversight and accountability to affected populations.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

Procurement for this emergency operation will be managed by the National Society (MRCS). Given the short-term and emergency nature of the response, procurement will be limited to dignity kits, shelter materials, and NFIs, which will be sourced primarily from local suppliers to ensure speed and cost-effectiveness. These procurements are intended for direct distribution to returnees rather than replenishment. Tendering processes are expected to be expedited. For the cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), the Financial Service Provider (FSP) has already been identified and engaged, ensuring readiness to deliver unconditional cash transfers at reception centres and as return packages. This arrangement minimizes delays and ensures that cash assistance can be rolled out immediately upon arrival of returnees.

Monitoring of the operation will be led by MRCS staff, supported by volunteers, with oversight from IFRC. The operation will be tracked



through Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) systems, including daily situation reports, distribution records, and feedback mechanisms under Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).

Progress will be measured against key indicators such as:

- Number of returnees receiving cash assistance.
- Number of dignity kits and NFIs distributed.
- Number of vulnerable individuals (women, children, elderly, persons with disabilities) supported through PGI activities
- Functionality of reception centres and transport arrangements.
- Feedback received and addressed through CEA mechanisms.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

Code - Malawi Red Cross Society
Population Movement 2026

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	295,569
Shelter and Basic Household Items	25,365
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	230,498
Health	6,859
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	4,899
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	4,899
Education	0
Migration	12,272
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	10,778
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	79,195
Coordination and Partnerships	18,126
Secretariat Services	15,848
National Society Strengthening	45,220

TOTAL BUDGET **374,764**

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



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For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[Click here for the reference](#)

