

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- Tropical depression Chido developed on 5 December in the southeast Indian Ocean Basin and then moved west, developing into a moderate tropical storm with a sustained wind speed of 70km/h on 9 December. Chido reached its peak on 12 December, when it was classified as a Category 4 cyclone on the Saffir-Simpson wind scale, sustaining speeds of 250km/h. **Early morning on 14 December, Chido made landfall in Mayotte, with sustained winds of 225km/h** (NASA 14/12/2024; OCHA 15/12/2024; Zoom Earth accessed 17/12/2024).
- By 18 December, **at least 22 deaths and 1,500 injuries had been reported, a figure that could rise significantly as relief efforts progress, as many people remain missing** (The Guardian 17/12/2024; ECHO 16/12/2024 and 15/12/2024; Le Point 15/12/2024).
- Tropical Cyclone Chido is the strongest storm to make landfall in Mayotte in over 90 years and has caused significant damage to key infrastructure – including hospitals, the airport, and roads – and disrupted electricity, water, and communications (NASA 14/12/2024).
- Estimates indicate that, prior to the cyclone, **40% of houses in Mayotte were already in precarious condition**, and the storm's impact only further devastated these structures. Around 100,000 people lived in such dwellings, equivalent to one-third of Mayotte's population (BBC 16/12/2024; Radio France 16/12/2024; GEO 16/12/2024). **Around 320,000 people officially live in Mayotte, but authorities state that there could be as many as 200,000 more, including people on the move with irregular status, mostly from the nearby island nation of Comoros** (The Guardian 17/12/2024).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

- Cyclone season in the southwest Indian Ocean typically runs from mid-November–March, or even April. There is a high risk that Mayotte's islands will be further affected in upcoming months (AP 17/12/2024; CNN 16/12/2024).
- Damage to water systems and essential infrastructure disrupted access to clean water from 14–16 December. In some areas, clean water still remains scarce, forcing people to resort to using unsafe water sources or drinking contaminated water, which is likely to cause dehydration, intestinal problems, or other illnesses. By 17 December, access to safe drinking water remained limited (Franceinfo 17/12/2024; Reporterre 18/12/2024; BBC 16/12/2024). Prior to the cyclone, water access was already limited and scarce (Le Monde 27/11/2024; France 24 17/09/2023).

- The cyclone has destroyed hospitals, roads, schools, houses, and other basic infrastructure (TF1 Info 14/12/2024). Such damage indicates that the cyclone's impact will have medium to long-term effects and activities such as school and many jobs will face disruption.
- The death toll is likely to increase in the coming days, as authorities have been struggling to establish the true number, accounting for the large number of people on the move with irregular status (around 100,000 people) (BBC 16/12/2024).

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

- The impact of Cyclone Chido has made most roads impassable, with around 70% affected by debris, which the authorities are working to clear (NYT 17/12/2024). Trees have been uprooted and roofs blown off, likely hindering relief efforts and the movement of humanitarian supplies (TF1 Info 16/12/2024; BBC 16/12/2024).
- As there is a lack of local capacity to respond to the emergency, rescue teams and medical staff must travel from other islands and countries. On 17 December, the Red Cross announced that 200 of its volunteers might be missing (The Guardian 17/12/2024).
- Mayotte's airport remains closed to civilian flights, as its control tower has been badly damaged. It is not expected to reopen until at least 19 December, but humanitarian and emergency flights for rescue teams remain active (AP 17/12/2024).
- The disruption to electricity, mobile phone, and internet networks is making communications difficult across the archipelago, further complicating response coordination and the assessment of humanitarian needs (TF1 Info 16/12/2024). By 16 December, 85% of the territory was without power (BBC 16/12/2024).
- Beginning on 17 December, the authorities in Mayotte ordered a 22:00–04:00 curfew to prevent looting amid food and fuel shortages (The Guardian 17/12/2024).
- The humanitarian effort may be hindered by fear of potential arrest for people without documentation. Before the cyclone struck, many migrants with irregular status living in makeshift shelters declined to move to prefecture-provided shelters out of fear of deportation. This fear could also cause some individuals to avoid seeking assistance at the emergency shelters established by the authorities (The Guardian 17/12/2024; TF1 Info 16/12/2024).

CRISIS IMPACTS

Health

Cyclone Chido has caused significant damage to healthcare facilities, including the partial destruction of the hospital in Mamoudzou, the capital of Mayotte, where the maternity ward was flooded and around 70% of services were suspended (Franceinfo 16/12/2024). Detailed assessments have yet to be undertaken. Damage to healthcare facilities has severely affected Mayotte's capacity to provide medical care and health services. The destruction of infrastructure has also led to concerns about potential disease outbreaks, such as cholera, as access to clean water and sanitation facilities is limited and many people are resorting to unsafe water sources (HuffPost 16/12/2024 Sky News 16/12/2024). Prior to Cyclone Chido, between February–July 2024, around 200 cases of cholera were reported in Mayotte, likely spread from the outbreak in Comoros that erupted in February 2024 (Franceinfo 17/12/2024; ECHO 22/05/2024).

Mayotte lacks the French Government's scheme allowing access to healthcare for people with irregular migration status. As a result, many people either lack access to health services or avoid seeking care out of fear of deportation (France24 17/12/2024). This is likely to worsen health conditions.

Shelter

The cyclone's winds, exceeding 220km/h, destroyed numerous homes, particularly in informal settlements where many people on the move reside. Entire neighbourhoods have been levelled, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless and in urgent need of shelter. By 16 December, more than 100,000 people (one-third of the official population) were sheltering in 70 emergency centres. The widespread destruction has resulted in a critical shortage of safe housing (The Times 16/12/2024; AP 17/12/2024).

Around one-third of Mayotte's population live in densely populated, tin-roofed, iron-sheeted huts in informal settlements, often called 'bangas', with no access to water. Many others live in houses made of wood and corrugated iron situated on hills, making them more vulnerable to the impact of Cyclone Chido (France 24 17/12/2024; The Guardian 17/12/2024).

Displacement

Widespread destruction has resulted in large-scale displacement, with many residents forced to seek temporary shelter. The exact number of displaced individuals is still being assessed, but the need for temporary housing solutions is urgent (AJ 16/12/2024; The Times 16/12/2024). The archipelago lacks the infrastructure to host affected people, meaning those affected will likely be sheltering in overcrowded schools or buildings, or with relatives.

WASH

By 17 December, the cyclone had severely compromised water and sanitation infrastructure, leading to concerns about access to clean water. This situation may result in the consumption of dirty or polluted water, which can lead to gastroenteritis or cases of waterborne disease, such as typhoid fever, leptospirosis, and cholera. Efforts are underway to restore these essential services, but the extent of damage poses significant challenges (Franceinfo 17/12/2024; The Times 16/12/2024; AP 17/12/2024; BBC 17/12/2024).

Food security

The cyclone destroyed banana crops and other products essential to the basic food basket, putting communities' food security at high risk. The Government has announced that it will bring in products from neighbouring Réunion to make up for the shortages (Franceinfo 17/12/2024). Mayotte is highly dependent on humanitarian and governmental aid, and the lack of food is causing uncertainty and a high risk of civil unrest. Shops are only partially open to avoid crowds, people are waiting in front of banks because cash machines are not functioning, and there is a fuel shortage (BBC 16/12/2024).

Livelihoods

The destruction of businesses, markets, and agricultural areas has led to significant economic losses, as most of the population relies on agriculture (aromatic and perfume plants) and ecotourism (such as boating and diving) that enhances its lagoon (GoF accessed 17/12/2024). Many residents have lost their sources of income, compounding the challenges of recovery, as 75% of the population lives under the national poverty line (BBC 16/12/2024; The Times 16/12/2024).

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS

Tropical Cyclone Chido

Tropical Cyclone Chido is the strongest storm to make landfall in Mayotte in over 90 years (NASA 14/12/2024). The hot and rainy season, with north/northwest monsoon winds in the southwest Indian Ocean, extends from December–March/April. Cyclones occur about three times a year in Mayotte, but tend to only enter the country's sphere of influence and turn southward before making landfall, and usually only cause rain (World Data accessed 17/12/2024).

COMPOUNDING/AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Insecurity

Crime-induced insecurity is a major concern in Mayotte. According to a 2021 National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies analysis, one-third of residents do not feel safe at home or in their neighbourhood. This is particularly true for women and victims of theft or threats. Approximately one-fourth of residents frequently or occasionally refrain from leaving their homes out of fear of insecurity. After Chido, such security risks may escalate further, particularly theft and looting (INSEE 08/11/2021; TF1 Info 16/12/2024). The majority of crimes are committed by minors, who make up 81% of those involved in violent robberies without weapons, 57% of robberies with weapons, and 72% of home burglaries (IFRAP 26/02/2024; INSEE 08/11/2021).

Poverty and unemployment

Around 77% of Mayotte's inhabitants (about 220,000 people) live below the national poverty line, making it the poorest department in France. The poverty rate is five times higher than that of mainland France, and the median monthly income is EU 260 (USD 273), compared to EU 2,600 pretax on the French mainland (INSEE 29/04/2021; IFRAP 26/02/2024; Reuters 16/12/2024; France 24 17/12/2024).

In Mayotte, the unemployment rate reached a record high of 37% in 2023; in mainland France, the unemployment rate was 7% for the same period. Experts have observed a decline in job opportunities in Mayotte since 2019 (INSEE 06/09/2024; WEKA 11/09/2024).

Sociopolitical tensions

As a result of its proximity to the Comoros, Mayotte sees many unsanctioned boats land on its shores. The proportion of non-native inhabitants in Mayotte is approximately 50% of the total population. These migratory flows cause many tensions. In January 2024, for example, communities erected roadblocks against African people on the move. Since April 2023, Mayotte has also experienced several episodes of violence as a result of the 'Wuambushu' operation, led by the French authorities, which aims to dismantle shanty towns and disproportionately affects people with irregular statuses (Franceinfo 15/12/2024; TV5 Monde 30/01/2024).

FUNDING AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

Mayotte is highly dependent on aid from France. Around 110 French soldiers have arrived to help with the response, with another 160 on the way, and around 800 other volunteers have also been sent to help police units (Euronews 16/12/2024; BBC 16/12/2024).

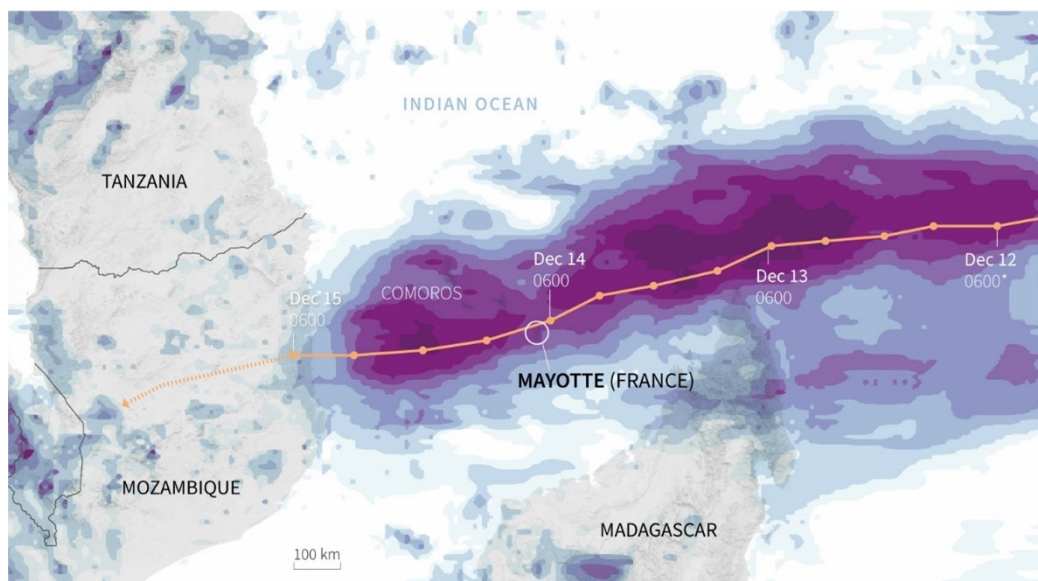
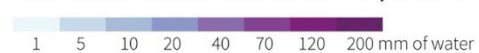
Most aid and rescue teams have been mobilised from France and the nearby French territory of Réunion (Newsweek 16/12/2024). France has also requested assistance from the Union Civil Protection Mechanism in the form of family tents and shelter kits (ECHO 18/12/2024).

President Macron has announced a visit to Mayotte in the coming days to assess the situation and deliver aid (Le Monde 18/12/2024).

Map 1 and 2: path of cyclone Chido

Cyclone Chido devastates Mayotte

Accumulated rainfall from December 12, 13 and 14



Sources: Joint Typhoon Warning Center, Global Precipitation Measurement Map data: OSM, NASA *GMT

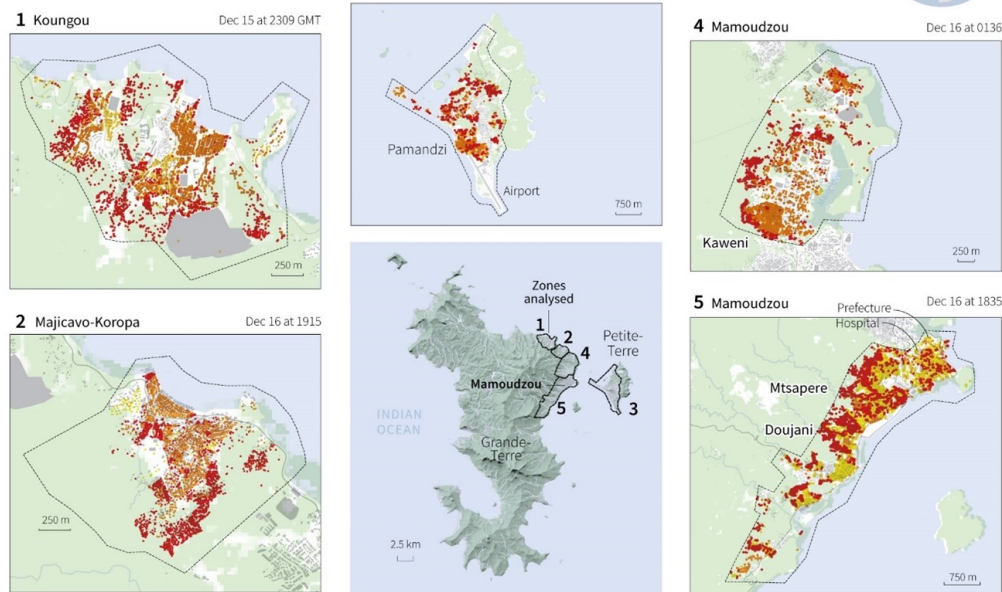


Source: Barron's (16/12/2024)

Cyclone-ravaged Mayotte

Buildings ● Destroyed ● Damaged ● Possibly damaged

According to initial analysis of satellite images of French territory of Mayotte



AFP Source: Copernicus EMS Map data: IGN, JAXA, Global Forest Watch

Source: Barron's (17/12/2024)