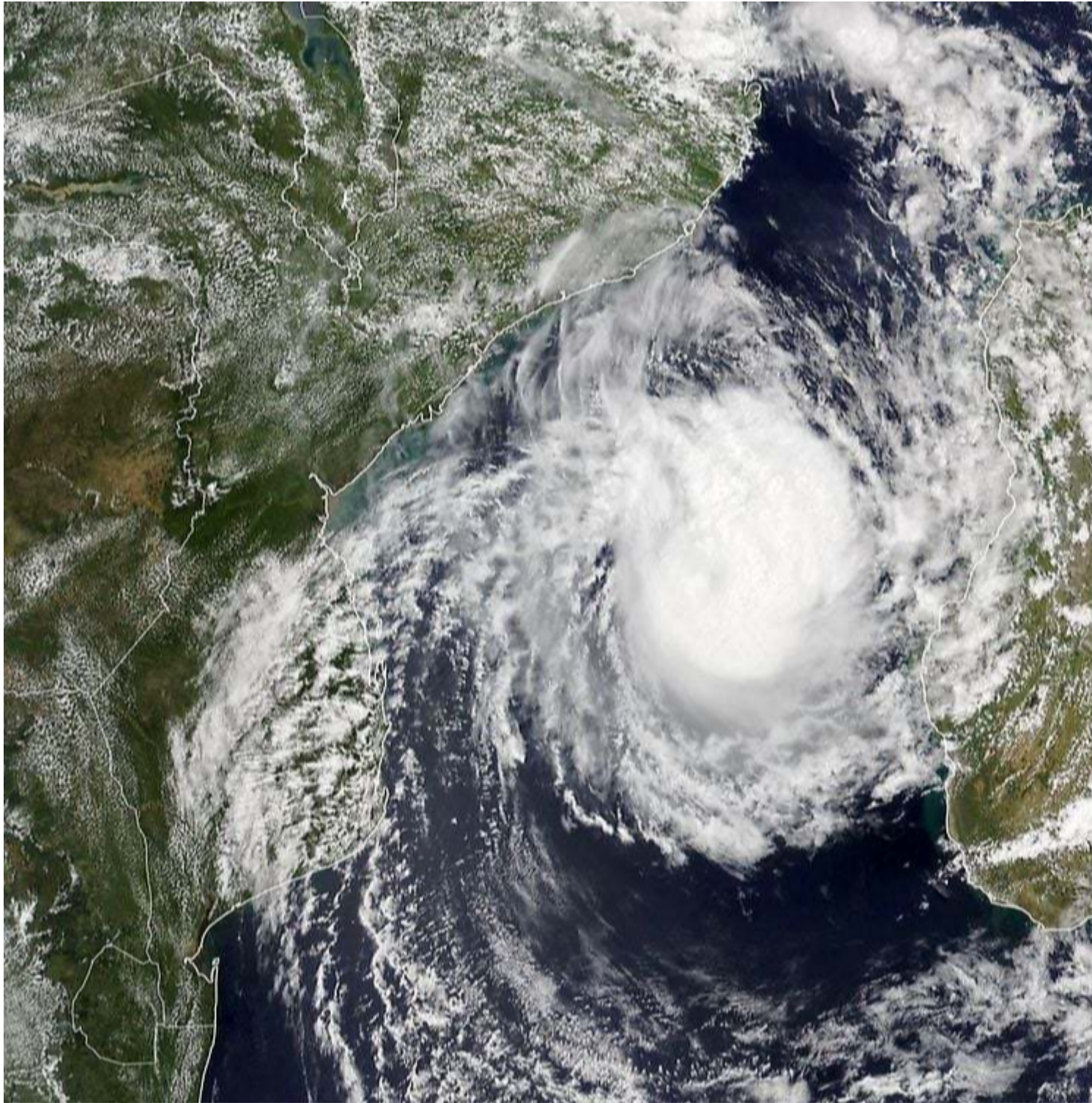


Cyclone Freddy causes more than 400 deaths in Southern Africa



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New Delhi, March 17 (RHC)-- The hydro-meteorological event Freddy has caused at least 400 deaths in its passage through southern Africa and experts attribute its strength and longevity to the warming of the oceans due to climate change.

Specialist Roxy Mathew Koll, from the Institute of Tropical Meteorology in India, said that "Freddy intensified rapidly seven times during its path".

The storm emerged at the end of February off the coast of Australia, traveled some 8,000 kilometers for more than 35 days and hit Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi twice. In Malawi alone, it caused 326 deaths.

According to data from Malawi's Department of Natural Disasters, 88,313 people have been displaced and at least 707 injured as a result of the cyclone.

The country's authorities also assure that Freddy has passed by, but they expect the number of deaths to increase as the rescue work progresses, especially in the city of Blantire (south), where the search for bodies trapped in the landslides continues.

During a visit to the regions affected by the heavy rains and floods, the UN coordinator in Malawi, Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, appealed for help from the international community.

Likewise, the UN Secretary General's spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, assured that his organization is currently working in 165 camps for displaced persons and is collaborating in rescue efforts.

Dujarric also explained that assistance materials such as food, tents and blankets, as well as water, sanitary and hygiene products are being sent to the most affected areas.

The Malawian authorities decreed 14 days of national mourning and admitted that they lack the necessary resources to attend to the victims of the catastrophe, and urged the international community to provide humanitarian support to attend to the injured. (Source/teleSUR)

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