

# Liz and Sergio Vilela

## Meet Eloise

February 2021



[www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela)

Dear friends,

We start our prayer letter with this verse as an encouragement to us all:

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.... For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." Isaiah 41:10 (NIV).

On Friday 22nd January, Beira and the surrounding area suffered a blow of another cyclone, called Eloise. It was roughly 24 hours of storm - the rain and wind started late morning with strong wind and heavy rain overnight. The eye brought calmness at around 2am and then it started again until it died out about 10/11am that morning. It was a category 2 cyclone, with winds of 150km/h (90 mph) and 250mm of rain in 24 hours. Although not as strong as Idai, which was category 4, it still brought with it destruction and fear, and for some it had the same impact as Idai.

It was rain that caused most problems as it had rained so much the week before that some areas were already flooded, and people in rural areas outside the city had to be evacuated and were brought to the same schools they occupied after Idai. Many Mozambicans are now more aware of the destruction that cyclones can bring and they prepared well by putting sand bags on their roofs to stop the wind taking them. This helped many, but for others their houses were still left with part or all of the roof missing, and due to the flooding the previous week and the storm, more than 1,000 houses have been totally destroyed and 3,000 badly damaged.

The cyclone was a new experience for us as we were in Brazil when Idai hit. We were thankful that the children were asleep all night, and it seemed like more of an adventure to them than any real possible danger.



The biggest concern for us was when, at about 6pm, Sergio arrived back from taking the car to shelter, when he smelt something in the kitchen. We couldn't work out what it was and didn't think much more about it. When we both came back into the kitchen about 10 minutes later, we saw the plug socket set alight. We quickly managed to put the fire out and Sergio turned off the electricity. He made the socket safe and we noticed that the wall was wet, hence the fire. That night, through the wind and the rain, I (Liz) was more concerned about another fire starting than anything else. Thankfully that didn't happen. We give thanks to God for his protection that night because if we hadn't been in the kitchen at the right time, this could have been a different story.



That night the rain came hard and the wind was hitting the bedroom windows so hard that I thought they would break. I asked Sergio if we should sleep in the corridor and he said we would be fine. We had put some tarpaulins over some windows outside and that helped to prevent some water coming in, but the one outside the lounge fell down and a few inches of water came in, but nothing was damaged. Then the wind died down and we knew that the eye of the storm was passing over us. It was calm with no sound. Then after about 20 minutes, it picked up again and this time it wasn't hitting the windows so it didn't seem as strong but with the noise of tin roofs and trees outside, it was obviously stronger than before.



The tiles on our roof started making noises and water came dripping in to the bedroom and hall. Thankfully only a few tiles moved and could be put back in the right place the next day. Some plastic roofing on the veranda broke and a tree in the garden fell. Other people had it much worse. Two days later, the owner of the house had already organised work to start fixing the infiltration of water to prevent any more fires. We give thanks to God for how he looked after us.

Many say that Mozambicans are very resilient and it's that it's so great to see. They go through so many difficult situations and just pick themselves up again and get on with it. Well, we want to question that and ask:

What else are they supposed to do?

What choice do they have?

Do they wait for someone to help them?

If they don't find more tin roof for their house today, they will spend another wet night at home.

If they don't go out and sell fruit the next day, they won't eat and will go hungry.

If they don't get the water out of the house as soon as they can, their children might get ill from diseases.

No one else will do it for them. The government won't help them. They don't have insurance to cover damage. They must do it for themselves.



So, it's great to praise their resilience, but it's also important to look at the reality they live in. These people go through so many adversities throughout their lives. They don't expect an easy life and they don't get an easy life. There is a lot to learn from these people and also a lot we can do to support them, showing that the hope that comes from God isn't dependent on circumstances or outcomes, but knowing we can trust in Him no matter what happens, He is with us.

Please pray for the Mozambican people as many rebuild their homes, as they continue to fight each day for a better life, and pray for the adversities that they constantly face. Pray that we may shine the light of Jesus, be thankful for the lives we live, and demonstrate the hope that Christ brings us.

God bless you and thank you.

Sergio, Liz, Chloe and Joshua.

If you would like to support Liz and Sergio Vilela by prayer and committed regular giving, visit [bmsworldmission.org/partners](https://bmsworldmission.org/partners) or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.

