

fears over likely Tokwe Mukosi dam breach



**Disaster ...Tokwe Mukorsi Dam Wall close to collapse (Picture credit David Coltart)**

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■ by Agencies

THE dam being built on the Tokwe River in Masvingo is close to bursting as water from heavy rains is finding its way through gaps in the uncompleted dam wall.

Tokwe Mukorsi dam was due to be completed at the end of last year but the deadline has passed with construction still not finished.

Pictures from the area show water gushing through breaks in the wall and a huge build-up of water in the reservoir behind it.

Villagers had to be evacuated as quickly as possible, with around 4,000 people believed to be at risk should the dam burst. According to the Daily News, the Zimbabwe Air Force is helping people evacuate.

The Minister for Masvingo province was quoted as saying that the government is on high alert and "A helicopter from the AFZ has been airlifting some families who were marooned by the floods but we are not yet sure how many people are still marooned."



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Construction of the dam began in 1998 but stalled in 2008.



An Italian company has been brought in to continue with the dam construction. On completion, the dam is set to provide irrigation for the fertile areas of Triangle and Mazoe and also hydro-electric power.

If the wall does collapse, huge swathes of Masvingo Province will be devastated. Large areas of rich agricultural land and the Gonarezhou wildlife reserve are in the direct path of the water.

Reports say that the Italian engineers were faced with all kinds of problems when they took over and have struggled to try and get the dam up to the necessary standard.

Opposition leaders blame government bungling for the crisis with Eddie Cross, member for MDC-T Bulawayo South reported as saying that if the government had heeded the advice given by the engineers brought in from Italy, the crisis would have been averted.

Added former Education Minister David Coltart: “Pray Zimbabweans and all her friends that the Tokwe Mukosi dam holds. The consequences of it breaching are just too horrendous to contemplate.

“Aside from the potential massive loss of life, Triangle, Hippo Valley and the Chilojo Cliffs - one of the most beautiful areas in the world - are all downstream.”

News of the flood, which began on Tuesday February 4 is only now filtering out to the wider world through social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

Most Zimbabweans are still in the dark as to what exactly is happening and whether or not the dam wall will hold.

