



Worsening Humanitarian crisis unfolds amid escalating flooding in ASAL counties

Joint statement and Appeal by the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kenya is currently experiencing heavy rainfall and the ASAL region is adversely affected with thousands of households displaced and livelihoods lost. The heavy rainfall has further caused massive destruction of property and critical infrastructure (road, bridges, schools, health centers and sanitation facilities), extensive displacement of populations, high risk of water-borne diseases, destruction of farmlands and death of livestock.

On April 8th, the Kenya National Disaster Operations Center (NDOC) issued an emergency alert for Garissa, Tana River, and Lamu counties due to heavy rainfall experienced in the first week of April in Mt Kenya, Aberdares, and Nyambene hills. This led to a rapid rise in water levels in the Seven Forks dam, posing a flooding threat to communities and infrastructure along the River Tana. As at 5 am on April 17th, 2024, the largest dam, Masinga, is overflowing, with the last dam (defense line) just 0.21 meters away from spilling over. The river gauging level at Garissa bridge at 4.95-5.0m (9th and 10th April 2024).

The [UN-OCHA Flash update of April 11th](#) highlighted Areas of particular concern as Marsabit, Turkana, Tana River, Garissa, Kirinyaga, Muranga, Kiambu, Meru, Kisumu, Nairobi and Kitui counties. In addition, The Kenya Meteorological Department has issued an advisory warning of increases heavy rainfall in most parts of the country with isolated storms for most of April with a high potential of destructive flooding along the River Tana.

Furthermore, the Kenya Highways Authority has alerted about roads, some of which were washed out during the last November/December 2023 El Niño rains. Despite efforts to pave and undertake corrective action over the past three months, the cyclical nature of road cut-offs presents ongoing challenges. Notably, on April 8th, the Garissa road was closed mere hours before a bus was washed away.

Flood Situation in the AHN Operational areas as at April 17th

Destruction of essential infrastructure

- The heavy rains and flash floods in the Kenya highlands have caused a major disruption of transportation infrastructure. In particular, the Garissa - Madogo road has already flooded and is damaged cutting off access between the two towns.
- There is a high risk of destruction of other roads, bridges, communication infrastructure and Water supply infrastructure therefore cutting water supply to towns and villages and boreholes submerged and contaminated.
- Six schools in Merti area of Isiolo have been destroyed. These schools were initially used as temporary shelter for displaced families who have been forced to move.



- In Marsabit county, bridges, main roads and feeder roads in Laisamis, North Horr and Saku sub counties have been rendered impassable closing off villages from critical infrastructure like markets and health centers.

Extensive displacement of households (especially those living along the river banks) and massive destruction of property and farm lands.

- In particular, Garissa County, Hulugho, Ijara, Masalani, Bothai, Liboi and Fafi sub-counties have been cut off, while farms along River Tana have flooded resulting in massive crop losses.
- An estimated 104 households have been displaced in Tana River County and 1200 households in Garissa county and are hosted at Water Ground site, Farmers Training College-FTC, IDPP camp ATC IDP camp, Younger Muslim IDP camp, Hyunger Primary IDP camp in Garissa Township, according to the Kenya Red Cross Society. These numbers are anticipated to increase as water levels continue to rise due to the ongoing rainfall in upper Tana River Basin.
- In Mororo (Kamukunji) of Tana river county, 10 households have been displaced and moved to Bula Baraka Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) camp which still hosts 200 households who have not returned back to their initial residences as a result of the El Nino that was experienced late last year.
- The displaced households in Tana river county have lost their property and crops which have been submerged in water. This has increased their food insecurity as they depend on farming as their source of livelihood. Farm land submerged and crops destroyed include: 196 acres in Kipini, 100 acres in Garsen North, 350kg of household maize, and 1680 acres in Garsen South
- Preliminary reports indicate that an estimated 100 households in Marsabit County have lost more than 250 livestock to the floods. The heavy rains and floods have also damaged homes, roads, and bridges and disrupted the flow of goods and services, including access to markets and healthcare facilities. (More than 160 livestock in Saku, mostly goat and sheep have been lost; 150 goats and sheep in Yaa Sharbana, 50 goats in Bura)
- A total of 420 Households have been displaced by the heavy floods in Merti, Isiolo county

Possible impacts of the Floods in ASAL Kenya

- a) **Health Impacts** - The **increased risk and incidence of water borne and vector borne diseases** because of the destruction of sanitation facilities (latrines), the contamination of water sources; poor living conditions of displaced people and stagnant water creating a breeding ground for disease causing vectors
- b) **Food Insecurity** - **Increased food insecurity and compromised household purchasing power.** Reduced access to nutritious and adequate food due to damage to farmlands and harvested food, the impassable roads causing high food prices and limited food availability. Consequently, there is a heightened risk of nutrition-related diseases especially among vulnerable populations (the elderly, the sickly, children under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers).
- c) **Neglect and heightened risks for vulnerable populations**, including children under five, the elderly, women, chronically ill individuals, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs), **face neglect and heightened risks during flooding events.** A surge in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases further compound these challenges, with the differentiated needs of all genders often unmet.
- d) **Worsening Impact due to previous climate change events** - The impact of the floods in ASAL counties will be further worsened by the two-year severe drought and the recent floods in late 2023 that the region has recently experienced. More than 4.4 million people who had been affected by acute food insecurity and poverty had not yet recovered with some still in the IDP camps



- e) **Dual impact on quality of life** - The impact of flooding on health and quality of life is two-fold: 1) flooding increases the risk and incidence of water borne and vector borne diseases because of the destruction of sanitation facilities (latrines), the contamination of water sources; poor living conditions of displaced people and stagnant water creating a breeding ground for disease causing vectors 2) reduced access to nutritious and adequate food due to the impassable roads causing high food prices and limited food availability. Consequently, there is a heightened risk of nutrition-related diseases especially among vulnerable populations (the elderly, the sickly, children under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers).
- f) **Local trade and economy** - Local markets have been disrupted from 1) Destruction of crops and livestock in the farms; 2) Damaged and impassable roads and 3) Damage and loss of goods from the flooding of the market and household storage areas. This has affected the supply of basic goods and foodstuff thus increasing their demand. There is concern over food and basic items price inflation due to these market dynamics and the challenge of accessing essential goods.

Key Appeal Messages from the members of the ASAL Humanitarian Network to the County and National Government to consider the following:

- 1) **Release available disaster management funding to scale up the floods response** with both a top-up to most vulnerable households to minimum household needs as well as widening the safety net program to include a larger population and to create social accountability mechanisms to promote stakeholder planning, monitoring and implementation of the action.
- 2) **Appeal for special focus on the needs of the elderly, People Living with Disabilities (PWD), pregnant and lactating mothers, women and young girls** who are at greater risk and are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of any disaster and displacement
- 3) **Closely collaborate with the local humanitarian CSOs in ASAL counties already implementing responses in their localised sites.** Support of locally led responses and scaled support to strengthen the flood responses that will sustain and reinforce existing local action of these frontline responders.
- 4) **In close collaboration with the local humanitarian community, urgently scale up of humanitarian assistance for displaced households.** Government agencies, county departments, international and local humanitarian partners to urgently scale up assistance with priority given to Multipurpose cash and voucher assistance) for immediate response and the most urgent humanitarian needs of food, shelter, Non-Food Items, WASH services and facilities to relocate the affected households
- 5) **Preservation of lives and livelihoods.** National and county governments of affected counties, as well as disaster management and humanitarian agencies should take all necessary measures to preserve lives and livelihoods.
- 6) **Effective communication and information dissemination.** We call upon the County and national government agencies to facilitate the dissemination of Early warning messages to communities in flood prone areas and health saving information via multiple media channels – Public Address Systems, Local radio, Social media and Community Health workers.
- 7) **Operationalize hub disaster operation centers with specialist teams** for search and rescue, call in toll lines, 24/7 operationally, deployment of logistical support includes boats.

-ENDS-



About the ASAL Humanitarian Network: is a 30 members platform led by local and national NGOs operational in the 10 most drought crisis vulnerable ASAL counties promoting a humanitarian system that enables timelier and more appropriate coordinated locally-led responses to affected people. AHN website - www.asalnetwork.org Facebook – [ASAL Humanitarian Network](#) Twitter - [@KenyaAsal](#) LinkedIn – [ASAL Humanitarian Network AHN newsletter](#)

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Ahmed Ibrahim ,AHN Convenor

Email – ahmed.ibrahim@asalnetwork.org