

Govt warns of heavy rainfall, flash floods

Ugandans in flood-prone areas have been advised not to cross flooded roads and bridges, and to clear drainage channels.

BY SYLVIA KATUSHABE

The office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has warned of destructive rainfall from February 19 to February 28, asking citizens to take necessary precaution measures.

In the weather advisory alert released by OPM, heavy rainfall and flash flood risks are expected in western, central (Lake Victoria Basin), and eastern Uganda, especially Elgon and Bukedi regions.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment, the weather update for February 19 to February 28, the month is generally characterised by hot, dry, and sunny conditions, and marks the end of the December to February dry season.

However, the Central region, particularly areas around Lake Victoria basin, and the South western parts of the country are currently receiving heavy showers, while other parts of the country are receiving isolated outbreaks of showers.

"It is also important to note that in February, Kigezi region may experience occasional, isolated rainfall compared to the rest of the country, which experiences a clear, dry, and hot season," the statement from the Ministry of Water and Environment reads.

Mr Alfred Okot Okidi, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment, further stated that the current rainfall being observed over parts of the country is expected to continue and spread to most parts of the country, with a slight relaxation towards the end of February.

Over this period, Western, Central,



A flooded section of Entebbe Road at Bata Bata last year. Ugandans in flood-prone areas have been advised not to cross flooded roads and bridges. PHOTO/STEPHEN OTAGE

and parts of Eastern region, particularly, Elgon region and districts around Lake Victoria basin are expected to experience enhanced rainfall, while the remaining parts of the country, are expected to experience moderate isolated rainfall during this period.

However, Mr Okidi noted that towards the end of February, Kigezi region, parts of Central and Eastern regions, especially the Elgon areas, are expected to experience enhanced rainfall, as the rest of the country, Western, Northern, and many parts of Eastern and Central regions, are expected to go through a slight relaxation of the current conditions.

According to the advisory from OPM, potential impacts include flash floods in low-lying and flood-prone areas, Urban flooding, especially in towns and cities, transport and businesses disrupt-

Rainfall.
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tions, landslides, mudslides, and rock falls on Mount Elgon and Kigezi regions, strong winds, and hailstorms.

Ugandans in flood-prone areas have been advised not to cross flooded roads and bridges, and to clear drainage channels around homes and businesses.

The advisory further urged the Local authorities to inspect high-risk zones

and issue guidance to residents.

For those in landslide-prone areas, they have also been advised to stay alert, especially those living on steep slopes, activate contingency plans, avoid cultivation and construction on unstable slopes, and monitor cracks in the soil or leaning trees as early landslide signs.

However, the mapped and registered households should evacuate when signs become imminent, but also report the signs to local authorities.

Farmers have been urged to use the rains to prepare gardens for early planting of food crops and fruit trees to improve nutrition and restore degraded areas, as well as to secure loose roofing and avoid sheltering under isolated trees during thunderstorms.