

Affected. In Kabale, the rain destroyed 20 houses displacing more than 100 people.

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Three babies die as heavy rain wreaks havoc on western region

WESTERN REGION. Heavy rain that has persisted for the last two weeks in districts of Kisoro, Rubanda, Rukungiri, Kabale, Rukungiri, Bushenyi, Isingiro and Bundibugyo have caused massive destruction and death.

Last Sunday, a downpour in Rukungiri District caused flooding at Kisizi Hospital located in a low lying area in Nyarushame Sub-county.

Three babies, who were in an incubator room, died after floods destroyed the 300 Watts generator used for lighting.

According to the deputy medical superintendent, Dr Francis Banya, the hospital compound, paediatric, maternity and surgical wards were flooded and filled by rubble from the surrounding hills.

"The Sunday downpour started at around 4pm and lasted about five hours. After the power blackout, three babies that were in the incubators died because oxygen supply was cut off," Dr Banya said.

"Some medical officers had to use small torches to carry out minor operations and surgeries after the power house was destroyed. Our only source of piped water was also destroyed. Currently, patients have been squeezed into other wards as staff clean up the affected areas," Dr Banya added.

The Nyarushanje LC3 chairman, Mr Michael Musime, said bridges and gardens were destroyed as well.

However, Mr Musime said the area had not experienced such a calamity in the past five decades.

Landslides

There were landslides in Nyundo, Bukimbiri Kanaaba sub-counties of Kisoro District last week. Houses, gardens were destroyed, animals killed and roads blocked by the debris.

The Kisoro District chairperson, Mr Abel Bizimana, said two people in the hilly areas died after they were swept by the running water.

"The havoc is as a result of environmental degradation. The nature is angry and government should take action," Mr Bizimana said.

200

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS IN ISINGIRO THAT HAVE BEEN DISPLACED

At least 42 goats and two cows were killed, Irish potato gardens and farms destroyed in Rubaya and Butanda sub-counties in Kabale, and Muko Sub-county in Rubanda District, according to Mr Herbert Baruhanga, the LC3 chairman.

The Katuna-Rubaya-Muko Road was also blocked by debris for four days before Uganda National Roads Authority intervened on Tuesday.

Mr Barnett Champion, the former Butanda Sub-county LC3 chairman, said in Kabale, the rain that lasted



Destruction. A banana plantation in Ndagutu Sub-county, Bundibugyo District that has been destroyed by heavy rains. PHOTO BY LONGINO MUKINDO

for close to six hours destroyed 20 houses displacing more than 100 people.

"About 120 people are homeless, they are now staying in the neighbouring trading centres," Mr Champion told *Daily Monitor* on Tuesday.

Heavy rains

Two people have reportedly died in Kashambya and Rwamucucu Sub-counties in Rukungiri District as a result of heavy rains.

An 8-year-old girl was reportedly swept away by running water while the 35-year-old woman was buried in her house as it was destroyed during the downpour.

Running water on Sunday swept Kishuro and Katanoga bridges, destroyed two gravity water systems in Isingiro District.

The LC3 chairperson of Namiyanja Sub-county, Mr Mujuni Kaheru, said this has crippled movement in the area.

"The rains started on August 15 and destroyed crops. They resumed on September 3 causing massive destruction of property. We were recovering from the dry season which caused hunger in the area but now the rains have taken away what we were surviving on. People in Eijugangoma, Nyarwenshami, Twamagondo and Nyakibare villages have nothing to eat because the rain destroyed all their plantations," he said.

A hailstorm that lasted two hours on Monday destroyed gardens and other property in Bushenyi-Ishaka Municipality.

The most affected areas are Kyeit-

Voices

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"Maybe they will be studying under trees because our classrooms are very few. I don't think parents can solicit money to put back the roof," SELEZIOUS BYOMUNTURA, CHAIRPERSON MITUNDA PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

vegetation cover has been lost, there are floods and landslides," said Mr Musingwire.

He added: "In terms of environmental degradation Kigezi sub-region comes first followed by greater Bushenyi, and then Mbarara, Isingiro and other districts in the cattle corridor."

For the last one month, heavy rain have displaced more than 200 residents in Humya and Mampuguro villages in Bubukwanga Sub-county.

Bundikahondo Seventh Adventist church and five primary schools including Mitunda, Bundibugyo, Bundikahondo and Galiraya have also been destroyed.

According to Mr Selezious Byomuntura, the chairperson Mitunda Primary school management committee, they are stuck as they have nowhere to relocate 200 pupils of the affected classes.

"Maybe they will be studying under trees because our classrooms are very few. I don't think parents can solicit money to put back the roof," Mr Byomuntura said.

Mr Franco Olaboro, the Bundibugyo District chief administration officer, said the heavy rain have hindered delivery of services in the areas as roads are impassable.

Two bridges have been washed away in Kisubba Sub-county cutting off the area.

Rivers Humya and Tokwe in Bubukwanga and Tokwe sub-counties have busted their banks destroying a number of plantations. In Ndagutu Sub-county, roofs of five schools were blown off by winds and storms.

The chairperson of the sub-county, Mr Bitamazire Mbogho, said more than 400 residents have been severely affected.

He revealed that the district disaster committee has assessed the damage, contacted the Office of the Prime Minister for relief support.

"We held a disaster meeting after the incident and we have temporary arrangements to relocate the Ndagutu sub-county offices to the community hall as we put back the roof," Mr Mbogho said.

He said the district administration has established temporary classes for the affected schools to enable them open for the third term.

According to the Red Cross Bundibugyo branch manager, Mr Tom Ndyababo, roofs of 150 houses were blown off and cassava, banana, maize, beans, cocoa and vanilla plantations destroyed.

More than 100 toilets facilities in Ndagutu Sub-county have been destroyed putting the area at a risk of a outbreak cholera outbreak.

The Bundibugyo's District chairperson, Mr Ronald Mutegeke, said government will build a proper drainage system to deter flooding.

Earlier incidents

In May 2016, 11 people were killed and several families displaced following heavy rains that destroyed homes and plantations.

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