

Alert note*Ghana Floods, October 18th, 2023,*

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Member: Presbyterian Relief Services and Development – Ghana.

Type of emergency: Widespread Flooding (Overflow of the Akosombo Dam)

Date of emergency (if rapid onset): October 11th, 2023

1. The nature of the emergency

Due to rising water levels upstream primarily driven by heavy rainfall, the Akosombo dam experienced a major outflow causing massive flooding in the Eastern and Volta regions of Ghana. This action was prompted by the escalating water levels upstream of the Akosombo Dam, primarily due to heavy rainfall in the area. According to the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO), the most affected region is the Volta Region.

An October 13th, 2023, statement from the Ministry of Information said, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo had ordered the setting-up of a Ministerial team to “coordinate government’s response to the unfortunate flooding of some communities following spilling from the Volta Dam.” The President of Ghana is expected to announce a major government intervention after interacting with residents and opinion leaders in the affected region. Various Civil Society Organizations, state agencies, organized groups have mounted pressure on the government to declare a state of emergency in the surrounding nine districts who have been displaced as a direct consequence of the flooding.

Before the dam overflowed, the Volta River Authority had issued advisories, urgently recommending residents to relocate to higher ground.

Houses are flooded, huge material damage has been done to crops and infrastructure. Crops have been destroyed and schools shut after two hydroelectric dams overflowed at Akosombo and Kpong.

The floods have resulted in the destruction of residential properties and farmlands and the significant disruptions of essential services especially water and electricity.

The displaced persons are hosted in schools and other institutions and are living in overcrowded conditions provided by the Volta River Authority (VRA) as accommodation is scarce. The displaced have limited access to safe water and this may lead to an outbreak of waterborne diseases due to unhygienic conditions as many are cooking outside. The displacement is as a direct consequence of the flooding.

The weather forecast predicts new precipitation in the coming days, so there is a possibility of phase 3 spillage. The volume of water spilled from the dams has also caused some lagoons in the Keta basin to overflow their banks, leading to flooding and the displacement in many communities in the Anlo and Keta districts. The floods have caused devastating destruction of homes and farmlands along the banks of the river Volta.

The amount of water coming into the dam "is so great" and this means the water spillage from the Akosombo Dam will continue. If we have two days of continuous rainfall, the dam could break, Edward Ekow Obeng-Kenzo, Deputy Chief Executive of the Volta River Authority (VRA) in charge of Engineering and Operations said in a radio interview monitored by Graphic Online on Accra based Citi FM on Monday morning (Oct 16, 2023).

The Presbyterian Relief Services and Development (PRSD) the development arm of The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, have development programs in the area. Some of the churches belonging to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana have been submerged.

A planned joint assessment coordinated by NADMO is ongoing and will continue as more areas become accessible and provide more accurate segregated data will be shared. One assessment from Asuogyaman and lower Manya Krobo District is available.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

Based on initial assessments, this is a medium-scale emergency affecting approximately 26,000 persons (4,000 Households) who were settled in three regions Volta, Eastern and Greater Accra (NADMO, 2023).

The Volta region lies on the Eastern side of Ghana and has vast arable land suitable for agriculture and fishing. The majority of them are farmers, fishermen and petty traders. Some live on their farms while others farm a distance from their homesteads which are interspersed along rivers in the affected regions.

Due to the widespread flooding, homes have been covered by the raging flood and many have lost their belongings in the affected regions. Crops on farms and those that were already harvested have been destroyed and this is likely to affect the livelihood and food security of the affected households in the short term and cause long term economic consequences. Roads have been cut off and essential services have been disrupted leaving some areas without access to **food, safe water and electricity**.

There is a possibility of **water borne diseases**, following the flooding as latrines were inundated with flood water and the water is polluted. There is also a likelihood of an increase of **Malaria** due to the presence of stagnant water. Education services have also been disrupted and some schools are being used to shelter the affected and due to access issues. The Volta Regional Environmental Health Directorate has appealed to authorities to provide safe drinking water to the affected communities.

The GRIDCo sub-station in Fievie, Sogakope, in the Volta Region, has been inundated with floods, leading to the shutting down of the station. With the absence of electricity, public institutions for example hospitals in Sogakope and Adidome, have no electricity leaving the lives of patients in danger.

3. Local and national capacity

Most of the affected people are displaced and living in schools and other institutions. Evacuation efforts are ongoing as many roads have been cut off with many opting to use traditional boats and canoes, further endangering their lives. PRSD works in development and emergency projects in the area to support rural communities develop various capacities in Leadership Development; Disaster Preparedness and Management; Capacity Building programs, Empowerment of Women and Youth among other programs. All the state agencies responsible for disaster management have been activities under the coordination national body NADMO. The Inter-ministerial working group is liaising with various stakeholders to mobilize support for the affected and the Ghana Navy continues to evacuate the affected.

4. Key needs and gaps

According to the initial assessment conducted by the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) working in conjunction with other stakeholders, the identified priority needs are.

- Emergency shelter (tents, as well as longer-term solutions to rebuild their structures)
- Non-food items (tarpaulins, blankets, mattresses, clothes, and kitchen sets etc.)
- WASH (latrines, potable water, detergents, and storage containers)
- Food assistance and protection.

Children are particularly vulnerable and have suffered severe psychological distress from the flooding requiring mental health and psychosocial support.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
Presbyterian Relief Services and Development	North and Central Tongu districts.	CASH response (food and NFI) and WASH.	Funds to provide immediate support	tbc

5. Potential responses

The Presbyterian Relief Services and Development has a long-term cooperation with the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) and local authorities in the affected areas in capacity building, development, and WASH projects. Since 2010, the organization has gained extensive experience in emergency response to natural and man – made disasters through ACT appeal mechanism. PRSD initial plans to respond include participation in the upcoming assessment and are in touch with the churches who are conducting rapid assessments where possible.