

Alert note*Kenya Floods, 18th May 2026*

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Forum: ACT Kenya Forum

Type of emergency: Flooding

Date of emergency (if rapid onset):

Kenya has been experiencing enhanced rainfall since February 2026, with heavy rainfall in Western, Rift Valley, Central, Nairobi, Lower Eastern, and parts of the Northeastern Region. The Coastal region has experienced windstorms and flood-related effects caused by the rainfall experienced in other parts of the country ([Kenya Flood 2026](#)).

According to the ECHO Daily flash of May 4th, 2026, heavy rainfall has been affecting several counties in Kenya since 21st April, causing rivers to overflow (particularly the Tana River). The resulting floods and landslides have resulted in casualties and widespread damage. The affected counties and regions are Tana River, Mombasa, Kwale, Tharaka Nithi, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Kiambu, Eastern, Central, Coast, Nairobi and Rift Valley ([ECHO Daily Flash of 4 May 2026](#)).

Media reports, as of 4th May, have reported 18 fatalities, of whom nine are in the Eastern region, three in the central region, and six in Coast, Nairobi, and Rift Valley regions. The media has also reported several displaced families and damaged infrastructures across the affected areas.

Floods in Tana River County began on 1st May 2026 after heavy rains and water releases from the Seven Forks Dams. Low-lying areas in Tana Delta Sub-county (Garsen-Tana Delta and Tarasaa Sub-counties) have been submerged, destroying homes, farms, schools, and roads. Families have been displaced into temporary shelters.

1. The impact and scale of the emergency

This is a major humanitarian crisis with urgent needs for food, clean water, shelter, health services, and protection for vulnerable groups. The government has identified 59 flood-prone areas in Tana River County, raising alarm over rising water levels and a growing humanitarian crisis across the county. Heavy upstream rains and controlled releases from the Seven Forks Dams have raised the Garissa gauge to 6.4m, well above the 5.0m flood warning level ([flood hotspots in Tana River](#))

Many families have been displaced to temporary camps and makeshift shelters after being forced to abandon their homes. Approximately 1,000 households across Tana River County are directly affected, with a significant portion in Tarasaa and Tana Delta. An estimated 6,000–7,000 individuals are impacted. The flooding has caused widespread destruction, displacement, and disruption of livelihoods in low-lying villages along the Tana River.

Subsistence farmers have lost crops such as maize, rice, and bananas, increasing food insecurity, and the Pastoralists face loss of livestock and grazing land due to flooding. Vulnerable groups such as children are at risk of malnutrition, interrupted education, and waterborne diseases, and women are facing increased caregiving burdens and heightened protection risks in displacement settings, while the elderly and persons with disabilities are experiencing difficulties accessing evacuation and aid services.

Tana River is one of the counties that is experiencing multiple crises, combining the effects of recurrent flooding, widespread poverty, weak infrastructure, prolonged drought, contaminated water sources, and the limited capacity of affected communities to recover from repeated shocks.

2. Local and national capacity

To cope with the situation, families have moved into overcrowded temporary shelters, sharing limited food and water resources, reliance on emergency aid and non-food item distributions, and engagement in alternative income activities such as casual labour to replace lost farming/fishing income.

Local structures/resources available to deal with the disaster

Schools and churches are being used as temporary shelters for displaced households, while local chiefs and administrative authorities are actively coordinating evacuation efforts and issuing early warnings. In addition, faith-based organizations are providing essential psychosocial support.

Local Government (Tana River County): Focused on mapping risks, mobilizing evacuations, and coordinating relief distribution with all stakeholders. They have also started distributing food and water, but resources are limited.

Security teams and local leaders are also urging residents in low-lying areas to heed evacuation advisories in a bid to prevent further loss of life.

The national government is implementing contingency measures under the National Disaster Risk Management Policy, with the National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC) and National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU) overseeing coordination. The national emergency response plan is being implemented; however, due to financial constraints, external forces are needed to fill in the gap.

Early warning alerts from the Kenya Meteorological Department are being disseminated, and multi-agency teams (including Kenya Red Cross) are on the ground.

The Kenya Red Cross is supporting displaced families with shelter, water treatment chemicals, vector control, and integrated health outreach services.

At the same time, the organisation has activated its Early Action Protocol, working closely with county officials and local administrators to identify high-risk zones and coordinate response efforts.

However, as the number of affected households rises, urgent needs are emerging, particularly for food, clean water and additional shelter.

- National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC) and the National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU) coordinate national-level response.
- Tana River Disaster Management Committee is working with chiefs, faith-based groups, and NGOs to make sure aid reaches the right people and efforts are not duplicated.
- Multi-agency task forces (government, Red Cross, NGOs) are deployed to flood-affected areas.
- FAO is in the process of vaccinating livestock to prevent disease outbreaks, and WHO is monitoring health risks like cholera and malaria.

Coordination is happening through the **UN cluster system**, which Kenya uses during emergencies. Clusters for **Health, WASH, Education, Food Security, and Protection** are being activated to bring together UN agencies, NGOs, and government offices.

3. Key needs and gaps

Families are living in temporary shelters while others are being evacuated. The biggest needs are food, clean water, safe shelter, health services, and education support and Livelihood recovery. According to government assessments and UN standards, the minimum requirements for water, sanitation, and shelter are not being met. The Kenya Red Cross in partnership with the county government, is helping with the evacuation and registration of victims.

Gaps

Many families do not have proper shelter, enough food, or clean water. Health services are stretched, and children’s education is badly disrupted.

There are also information gaps no full data yet on how many households are displaced, or detailed breakdowns by age and gender. These will only be clear once ongoing assessments by the county government and Kenya Red Cross are finished. Several remote villages remain underserved due to damaged roads and limited access infrastructure.

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.

4. Forum Capacity and members intention to respond

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise and experience
NCKK	Tarasaa Sub-county, Tana River County	Relief food distribution, cash transfers, psychosocial support through religious platforms, mosques, and churches, advocacy for farmer compensation, and early warning messaging.
KELC	Tana Delta Sub-county, Tana River County	Relief food distributions, Cash Transfers, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), non-food items distribution, protection, WASH,

5. Potential responses

Immediate response options include:

- **Shelter:** Mobilizing available church facilities as temporary shelters for displaced households.
- **Food and Non-Food Items:** Distributing essential food rations, hygiene kits, and basic household supplies.
- **Cash Transfers** to affected families to enable them to meet their basic needs
- **Health:** Supporting mobile health outreaches to address urgent medical needs, disease surveillance, and referrals.
- **WASH:** Improving access to safe water and sanitation through water treatment supplies, hygiene promotion, and support to damaged water points.
- **Livelihood Recovery:** Initiating recovery activities such as seed distribution for farmers and replacement of lost fishing gear for affected fisherfolk.

The response aims to reach approximately 5,000–7,000 people in the most affected wards of Tana Delta and Tarasaa Sub-County, with priority given to displaced families, women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

To respond effectively, the requesting members will require:

Financial resources for cash transfers and to procure and distribute emergency relief supplies.

Technical expertise in WASH, public health, protection, and emergency education.

Logistical support for accessing remote and cut-off villages.

Strong coordination with county authorities, national response mechanisms, and humanitarian clusters to ensure complementarity with government-led interventions and avoid duplication.