



UDGOON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (USDI)

RAPID NEEDS ASSESMENT REPORT

FLASH FLOODS IN GARISSA AND TANA RIVER COUNTIES

21st – 26th November 2023



1. Introduction

The situation in Garissa and Tana River Counties is deeply precarious, marked by persistent vulnerability and natural disasters, such as drought and flooding. Under the relentless onslaughts of the continuous rainfall, the counties are grappling with severe consequences of a perilous mix of riverine floods and flash floods intensified by the El Niño. These adverse weather conditions have had severe effects on vital road networks connecting Nairobi to Garissa, Tana River to Mombasa, Tana River to Nairobi and Garissa to Tana River leading to the isolation of people and presenting significant challenges. The most recent drought has inflicted considerable hardship in these counties, and the rains have offered some relief.

According to France 24 news, Garissa is experiencing heavy rainfall and floods linked to the El Niño weather phenomenon. These have claimed dozens of lives and large-scale displacement. The majority of the population in the district are agro-pastoralists along the Tana River with the farmers producing cereals, fruits and vegetables, which have been swept away by the floods.

Humanitarian Situation

Garissa and Tana River Counties faces recurrent crises flood displacement. The Counties were among the most drought-affected counties in Kenya 2021/2022. Due to the floods, over 5,000 people in Garissa and Tana River have been displaced from their homes and live in displacement camps, in temporary shelter, in evacuation centers, mostly schools and social halls where available. Health facilities, government offices and the police line have also been submerged in Garissa.

Impact on Infrastructure and Livelihoods:

The effects of the flooding have been catastrophic resulting in the isolation of several villages due to the cut-off of roads, which have impeded the free movement of people and goods. The Garissa-Nairobi highway, a crucial artery for trade and connectivity, has been decimated, exacerbating the difficulties faced by the residents.

Public Health Crisis:

The health implications of the flooding are deeply concerning. The inundation has exposed the communities to a heightened risk of waterborne diseases, including but not limited to typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis, hepatitis, and malaria. These diseases pose a significant threat to the well-being of the people and need urgent intervention.

Food Insecurity:

The flood has led to a shortage of food, further exacerbating the hardships faced by the communities. The scarcity of essential supplies raises the specter of hunger and malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Maternal Health Emergency:

Of great concern is the elevated risk faced by pregnant women due to the inaccessibility of health facilities. The flooding has created an environment where the chances of maternal deaths are significantly heightened. Urgent measures are needed to ensure that expectant mothers have access to the necessary medical care.

Methodology

The assessment was conducted by USDI between 21st – 26 November 2023, targeting 12 flood-affected locations in Garissa and Tana River Counties using a standardized rapid needs assessment tool. The organizations' technical team conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) targeting community/ temporary camp leaders and used observation to understand the impact of the affected communities. KIIs were the main source of the data, while observations were used to verify some of the findings and issues that required clarification.

Rapid Assessment Objectives

- To assess the impact of floods as a result of the heavy rains in Garissa and Tana River Counties
- To identify the immediate needs of impacted communities that require urgent action
- Observe the current situation in order to provide accurate information for effective response planning

Interviews

12 KII interviews were conducted with community leaders and affected community members.

Field Observation

The survey team relied on direct field observation of affected areas, health status analysis, and environmental health, particularly latrines, water points, and shelters.

Assessed Locations

Using a convenient sampling approach we selected 12 accessible IDP camps among those affected by the floods in order to generate some evidence relating to the impact of heavy rains. Below are the assessed IDP camps.

County	Sub-County	IDPs	No. Assessments conducted	No. Households per Camp
Garissa	TOWNSHIP	Nep tech training	1KII	514
		Hyuga	1KII	414
		Jaribu	1KII	193
		Kazuku	1KII	260
		Water ground	1KII	330
		Nyuki	1KII	300
		FTC	1KII	370
Tana River	BURA(Madogo)	Bula Barak Camp 1 Camp 2	1KII 1KII	1,200 141
		Adeley Camp 1 Camp 2	1KII 1KII	180 117
		Maroro Camp	1KII	500

Assessment Findings

General Information

The assessed locations reported that floods have impacted the population living in the settlements. There are approximately 5000 households living in the assessed villages and of these nearly 85% have been severely affected by the floods. More than 4,000 children who live in the camps were directly affected by the floods. Over 100 people were reported injured by floods, and more than 3,000 households moved from their homes due to floods to designated camps/relatives within Garissa and Tana River Counties and others within the settlement in open-air areas. 6 out of the 9 assessed villages have received information about the upcoming rains, risks associated with them, and safe areas to move to.

Basic Infrastructure (including roads and markets)

Local market operations have been disrupted due to;

- 1) Destruction of crops and livestock in the farms
- 2) Damaged and impassable roads
- 3) Damage and loss of goods from the flooding of their shops.

This has affected the supply of basic goods and foodstuff thus increasing demand. There is concern over food and basic items price inflation due to these markets dynamics and the challenges of accessing essential goods.

The heavy rains and floods have seriously damaged the transportation infrastructure, particularly major link roads in Garissa and Tana River.

Shelter

Over 3,000 households' shelters have been destroyed by floods; the majority of the impacted households are using thatches and maize stock to cover water and mud on the floor of their rooms and outside. Almost half have lost their household properties, including livestock. Their immediate shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) priorities are tents, tarpaulin, construction materials, cooking utensils, bedding materials, and mosquito nets. Based on the responses provided by the interviewed community leaders, most of the households displaced by the flash floods have the intention of relocating in case the situation develops further deterioration and schools are opened while still in accommodated in schools.

Protection

During the onset of crises, vulnerable families especially women and their children were at risk of protection concerns and violations. During this flood devastation, the assessed communities reported 20 protection-related incidents, and cases. Mostly, the village relief committees were in place, while no protection committees were present in the settlements assessed. Reportedly, few children were separated from their families. Women, girls, and young children are vulnerable to physical and sexual violence due to the destruction, and massive displacement from their homes. Quite a number of the assessed communities are feeling unsafe and there was no report of violence taking place. Children may be used as labor sources to support their families as a result the family's needs have increased.

Food Security and Livelihood

The primary source of support and income for all the assessed villages and pre-urban is farm produce, which is now heavily affected by floods. Approx. 1600 farmlands were completely submerged by water leaving limited access to food. Following the little response from Kenya red cross humanitarian assistance, people survive on debt, reducing food intake, and selling of personal items. Floods have impacted livelihood and potential income sources as there is no longer access to casual labor, especially for construction sites, farms, and digging of latrines.

The main source of food for the majority of respondents is borrowing or purchasing from the nearby markets. Currently, there is a limited variety of commodities due to the flood water in the main market and limited road access to and from the farms. The price of commodities has drastically hiked, resulting in vulnerable communities' lack of purchasing power which will lead to severe food shortages. Most households in the assessed IDPs were described by the community leaders as highly food insecure, eating whatever is most readily available or cheapest, which may not be the most nutritious food.

Price of food comparison before and after floods

Commodities	Unit(Kgs)	Price before floods	Price after floods
Rice	1 Kg	150	350
Sugar	1 Kg	200	400
Flour	1 Kg	100	150
Oil	3 litres	800	1200
Beans	1 Kg	200	300

Health and Nutrition

There are some health facilities affected by the floods, and the assessment revealed a critical shortage of sufficient health supplies which is hindering the delivery of adequate health services to the affected population. An increase in respiratory and malaria cases, particularly among children, has been reported. The available services are insufficient to meet the growing health needs of the community, as reported by the elders. Reduced access to nutritious and adequate food due to impassable roads causing high food prices and limited food availability. Consequently, there is heightened risk of nutrition-related diseases especially among vulnerable populations (the elderly, children under 5, sickly, pregnant and lactating mothers).

WASH

Due to heavy rains and excessive river flooding, currently access to safe water is a challenge for the displaced people. The primary water source is the Tana River which is flooded and has affected the water systems, resulting in scarcity of clean water.

On the other hand, the floodwaters have also destroyed latrines, leaving the community without access to proper sanitation facilities. In total, over 1,200 latrines have been damaged, increasing the risks of disease outbreaks. Open defecation has been observed within the displaced settlement, heightening the risks of waterborne diseases such as AWD/cholera.

Communities are resorting to using floodwater for drinking and household purposes, posing a severe risk to public health. The consumption of contaminated water increases the likelihood of waterborne diseases and other health hazards within the community.

The Most urgent Needs Requested by more than 95% of the population are;

1. Food and cash transfer support
2. Shelter and NFI such as plastic sheets, blankets, mats, mosquito nets, utensils, etc.
3. Drinking water surveillance including monitoring of water quality parameters
4. Water treatment support including provision of chlorine to flood-affected households
5. Distribution of storage water containers
6. Mass solid waste collection campaign to improve environmental health aspect
7. Construction of dumping waste disposal pits/sites

Health and Nutrition Assistance

1. Staff and Supplies: Urgent recruitment of staff and provision of essential medical supplies to health facilities.
2. Infrastructure Repair: Immediate repair of latrines in affected health facilities to ensure access to health and nutrition services.
3. Mosquito Control: Implementation of measures to control mosquito infestation and mitigate the risk of increased malaria cases.

Food Security and Livelihood

1. Provide Empowerment programs such as subsidized projects (Farm inputs) including Seeds, tractor hours irrigation cost, and technical support of Agricultural extension services to small-scale farmers affected by River flooding. This may be implemented when the land dries up
2. Execute a Cash-transfer program to assist needy households and extremely poor farmers who lost their crops during the river flooding.

Sample Pictorials of the Flood Devastation



