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National News

Destruction The heavy rains that have been pounding Turkana cut off as

County commissioner assures road users that various agencies are trying to repair the road even as they seek alternative routes

BY OSCAR KAKAI AND SAMMY LUTTA

Days of torrential rains continued to cause severe flooding in most parts of the country leaving at least 50 people dead on Sunday night alone.

By last evening, according to Transport Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, at least 120 people had lost their lives, with the Mai Mahiu tragedy accounting for the highest number of deaths at 46.

The heavy rainfall washed away houses, cut roads, inundated farmlands and displaced residents across the country.

Travellers were forced to spend Sunday night in the cold as the only road connecting Turkana County to the rest of the country was damaged following heavy rains in the area.

The Kitale-Kapenguria-Lodwar-Juba highway was cut off at Lous market in West Pokot County, paralysing transport along the road and leaving and communities isolated.

The most affected road users were teachers and students traveling back to school for the second term, and traders in Kainuk, Lokichar, Lodwar, Kakuma and Lokichoggio towns who rely on Kitale and Kapenguria towns for fruits, cereals and vegetables.

West Pokot County Commissioner, Khalif Abdulahi said that after receiving reports of the incident, traffic police from Marich Police Station were dispatched to the site.

“Our priority is the safety and well-being of the stranded travellers. We’re working tirelessly to explore solutions and restore connectivity as quickly as possible,” he said, explaining that relevant agencies were exploring alternative routes.

He assured the public that updates on the highway would be disseminated promptly.

Efforts to restore the highway were underway yesterday, with emergency personnel and construction crews mobilised. The contractor for the ongoing Marich Kopass road construction has been engaged to help out.

Stranded passengers said the government should move with speed to provide an alternative route.



The Kitale-Kapenguria-Lodwar-Juba highway road was cut off at Lous area in West Pokot County yesterday. OSCAR KAKAI | NATION



Cecillia Wanjiku and Hannah Wangeshi move their household items yesterday in Kayole Nairobi as heavy rains caused havoc in the area. BILLY OGADA | NATION

“It’s a nightmare. We were on our way to Lodwar for business, but now we’re stuck here with no idea when we’ll be able to continue our journey,” said John Kiptum.

Kosetei sub-location Assistant Chief Joseph Siwa who was on the road said: “We call on the government to intervene in con-

120

Number of people who have died due to heavy rains and flooding according to Transport CS Kipchumba Murkomen

structing gabions along the busy highway to prevent more damage.”

Public service vehicle driver John Logiron said that the section was destroyed around midnight forcing them to spend the night in the cold.

Other sections of the road that have been affected are Kalemngorok drift between Kainuk and Lokichar and between Karoge and Kasuroi.

Kalemngorok resident Esther Ajuma said that since Lodwar and other major towns in the county rely on Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu counties for most of their basic commodities, without a reliable bridge at Kalemn-