

Three days of national mourning began in DR Congo on Wednesday, December 14th following the death of 120 people who were killed on Tuesday as the worst floods in year's battered capital Kinshasa.

The announcement was made from Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde's office in a statement released on Wednesday.

Major roads in the centre of Kinshasa, a city of some 15 million people, were submerged for hours, and a key supply route was cut off.

The death toll — which was first estimated in the late afternoon to be at least 55 — jumped to more than 120 by nightfall.

According to Deputy Prime Minister of the Interior Daniel Aselo, who reported on the meeting chaired by the chief executive, the government will take care of the funerals of all those who died.

The government has also said that arrangements will be made for funeral activities to be organized by the commune to avoid families travelling long distances to go to a single place.

Government and the city of Kinshasa officials have visited several sites to observe the damage caused by heavy downpour.”

“The President of the Republic has asked the Prime Minister who, in turn, has instructed us to be able to offer their deepest condolences to all the families bereaved today,” said Daniel Aselo.

The Prime Minister has announced that rehabilitation should start for the destroyed national infrastructure, cut off in its part between the Matadi Mayo and Mitendi district in the commune of Mont Ngafula.

The governor of the city of Kinshasa, Gentiny Ngobila, on Tuesday, December 13 warned the people of Kinshasa to stop constructing dwellings shanty houses on flood-prone slopes, since the city suffers from inadequate drainage and sewerage.

“This umpteenth tragedy invites us to a collective awareness of the imperative need to respect urban planning rules by refraining from building on so-called non-aedificandi sites, from throwing garbage into rivers and gutters whose role is to facilitate the evacuation of rainwater and not to receive garbage of any kind

whatsoever”, advised Gentiny Ngobila.

“The anarchic constructions on the water drainage works and on the river beds must absolutely stop,” concluded the governor of the city-province of Kinshasa.

The head of state who was taking part in the US-Africa Forum decided to cut short his trip in Washington to return to the country following this natural disaster.

President Felix Tshisekedi who joined the United States yesterday in blaming climate change for major floods that have claimed around 120 deaths said that DRC is under pressure but unfortunately it’s not sufficiently heard or supported.

The flooding is an example of “what we have been deploring for some time” he said.

In November 2019, around 40 people in Kinshasa died in floods and landslides. Mont-Ngafula was one of the worst-hit areas, but a local resident said the flooding this time was even worse.

Landslides are common in Mont-Ngafula, often triggered by heavy rainfall and rampant urban development.