

At least nine people have died and seven others seriously injured following heavy rains and flooding across the country since the start of April, according to the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA).

Between April 1 and 14, the storms destroyed 118 houses and damaged 88 hectares of farmland, raising alarm among farmers already dealing with climate-related challenges.

In Kigali's Nyarugenge District, 36-year-old Claudine Uwase lost her home in a single night. "We had just finished eating," she said. "The walls cracked, and we ran out with the children as the house gave way. We didn't even have time to grab anything."

Uwase is among hundreds of families being relocated from disaster-prone areas. In Nyarugenge alone, 385 households have been evacuated. Another 505 are at risk in Gasabo District, with 312 already moved. In Kicukiro District, 35 families are being relocated, with four yet to move.

Emma Claudine Ntirenganya, spokesperson for the City of Kigali, said the evacuation is part of a larger campaign to protect lives as the long rainy season continues.

"We're asking families to seek refuge with relatives or friends. For those who don't have that option, we're temporarily accommodating them in schools as we work to provide rent support," she said. "We're doing everything possible to prevent more loss of life."

Weather forecasts from Meteo Rwanda show continued rainfall in coming weeks. MINEMA officials have urged the public to follow updates and take precautionary measures — reinforcing homes, clearing water channels, and staying alert.

Adalbert Rukebanuka, in charge of disaster prevention at MINEMA, said recent simulations in Rubavu District have helped communities prepare for emergencies.

"Two weeks ago, we conducted drills in flood-prone areas along the Sebeya River," he said. "We now have water retention walls and clear evacuation points."

Rubavu was among the districts hardest hit by flooding in 2023. Now, along with Rutsiro, Nyabihu, Rusizi, and Nyamasheke, it tops the list of high-risk areas. A recent government assessment identified 522 zones across the country that could

be affected by heavy rainfall — home to over 22,000 houses and around 100,000 people.

Minister of Emergency Management, Maj Gen (Rtd) Albert Murasira, told senators last week that protecting these communities remains a top priority.

For displaced residents like Uwase, the road ahead remains uncertain. But she's focused on what she still has.

"We lost our home and everything in it," she said. "But my children are safe. That's all that matters now."