

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

Reports of dead fish that were seen on Lake Kivu in Minova, South Kivu province last week, continue to stump authorities searching for a definitive answer, leaving some worried it could happen again.

At the moment, authorities in DR Congo have temporarily suspended fishing in a part of Lake Kivu, following reports of dead fish rising to the surface, according to local media reports.

Reports indicate that on June 3, 2022, at around 2:00 pm in the Bweramana area in North Kivu and Minova in South Kivu, local residents began to see dead fish on the waters in Lake Kivu.

A team from the Ministries of the Environment and Health was dispatched to investigate the cause of the deaths, but have not explained what caused the deaths.

Some residents and local authorities suspect the deaths may have been caused by methane gas.

Residents of the Bweremana area, as well as the police and the Department of Environmental Protection, confirmed that they had seen dead fish floating on the water at 8 a.m. on June 3, 2022.

Dede Mwamba, a local administrator in the territory of Kalehe urged the population not to fish at the lake or even go near it until further notice.

“It must be methane gas, but we are still investigating to find out more,” Mwamba told the media.

Jean-Pierre Muongo, who owns a gas and hydrocarbons company, disputed the claims and said the cause of the deaths could be another factor.

“We will have to take one of the fish to the ISP Bukavu laboratory and there they can find out what is the cause of the death of these fish,” Muongo said.

In September last year, leakages from a diamond mine caused pollution that killed huge numbers of fish in the Kasai River Basin, particularly along the Tshikapa River.

Meanwhile, the management of Volcanic Surveillance Agency (OVG) has rejected the gas to be the cause of dead fish found on the water in Lake Kivu

They say that the dead fish has nothing to do with the gas found in Lake Kivu, as many suspected but may have been killed due to other incidents still unknown.

On June 3, 2022, at around 2:00 pm in Bweramana the area in North Kivu and Minova in South Kivu, dead fish were found in the water in Lake Kivu.

OVG officials say they sent experts to Minova on June 4 to look into the incident and interview residents, where residents of Mubambiro, Monusco, Sake, Baie de Sake, Ngumba, Kirotshe, and Nyamubingwa camps reported that no dead fish were found on the water.

OVG officials say that the floodwaters had stopped on the morning of June 4, disputing that the surface area of the fish is less than 50 meters above sea level while the gas in Lake Kivu would have caught all the fish in the area.