

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, AUGUST 26, 2026

Abuja Flooding: A Collective Call for Prevention, Preparedness and Environmental Responsibility and Accountable Governance

Every resident, community, and levels of government has a role to play. A city with waterways, drainage systems, and green spaces should not become a danger zone whenever there is heavy rainfall. The recent flooding across the FCT is a warning that demands collective action, stronger environmental governance, responsible urban planning, functional drainage, proper waste management, and effective disaster preparedness and risks management.

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD)**, through its **Environment, Sustainability and Natural Resource Governance Programme**, expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity with residents, families, motorists, businesses and communities affected by the recent flooding across the FCT. We recognise the fear, displacement, property damage, disruption of livelihoods and uncertainty that flooding brings, particularly for vulnerable households and communities.

On **Saturday, 15 August 2026**, heavy rainfall triggered flash flooding across several parts of Abuja, leaving residents and motorists stranded and disrupting movement. Flooding was reported around **Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent -Wuse II, Gudu, Efab Estate in Lokogoma, Gaduwa, Durumi, and Galadimawa**.. Flooding was also observed in **Katampe, Mabushi, Lugbe, Gwarinpa, Asokoro, Utako, Wuye, Maitama, Ebeano-Gaduwa, and other parts of the FCT¹** highlighting the widespread impact. Vehicles were submerged or damaged, businesses were temporarily disrupted, and several roads and connecting routes became difficult or impossible to navigate. The flooding did not occur without warning. On **30 July 2026**, the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NiHSA) identified the FCT among areas **at high risk** of flooding following rising water levels on the Gurara River. The FCT Emergency Management Department (FEMD) had also warned that flood-prone communities remained vulnerable during the peak of the rainy season.

As of now, **a verified official figure for the total number of people or households affected by the August 15 flooding in Abuja has not been publicly established**. IRIAD therefore cautions against the circulation of unverified figures. What is clear is that the flooding damaged vehicles and property, disrupted transportation, temporarily closed businesses, restricted access between communities, and heightened risks to lives and livelihoods².

The fact that flooding has repeatedly affected certain locations should be treated as an important planning and preparedness signal. Communities and locations with a history of flooding require extra attention, regular risk assessment, and preventive interventions before the rains intensify, not only emergency response after flooding occurs. The recurring vulnerability of flood-prone

¹ <https://guardian.ng/news/abuja-floods-how-green-areas-blocked-waterways-worsen-capitals-woes/>

² https://www.vanguardngr.com/2026/08/residents-count-losses-as-flood-sweeps-through-parts-of-abuja/#google_vignette

communities calls for targeted measures, including regular drainage clearing and desilting, improved drainage capacity, protection of waterways and drainage corridors, enforcement of planning regulations, flood-risk mapping, early-warning systems, and community preparedness.

Flooding is a natural hazard, but the extent of its impact is significantly influenced by government and human decisions and actions. The recent incidents raise serious questions about drainage capacity, indiscriminate waste disposal, obstruction of waterways, development around drainage corridors, land-use planning, infrastructure maintenance and compliance with Abuja's urban development plans. Reports of blocked manholes and underground drainage channels, with accumulated silt, solid waste and debris restricting stormwater flow, further demonstrate the need for preventive maintenance³. **Flood management cannot begin when the water has already risen. Prevention must come first.**

Call to Action: We Must Act Together

- **FCT Administration and Government Authorities:** Intensify drainage maintenance, flood-risk mapping, emergency preparedness, and preventive interventions across vulnerable communities. Locations with a history of flooding should receive special attention, routine inspection, and targeted preventive measures before and during the rainy season. The removal of structures obstructing designated waterways is an important intervention, but it must form part of a broader, transparent, and sustained flood-management strategy. We urge the FCT Administration to publish clear information on identified flood-prone areas, emergency shelters, evacuation routes, drainage interventions, and response mechanisms so residents can make informed decisions.
- **Honourable Minister of the FCT:** The recurring flooding demands decisive and sustained leadership. We call on the Honourable Minister to prioritise long-term flood resilience alongside immediate emergency response by ensuring that drainage systems are functional, waterways remain unobstructed, planning regulations are enforced, and communities repeatedly affected by flooding receive targeted interventions.
- **Federal Ministry of Environment:** Strengthen coordination with the FCT Administration, FEMA, FEMD, NEMA, NiHSA and other relevant institutions. Flood management must be treated as an environmental governance issue involving climate resilience, waste management, land-use planning, erosion control, drainage management and protection of natural waterways.
- **Community Heads and Traditional/Community Leaders:** Take an active role in flood prevention preparedness within your communities. Support public sensitisation, encourage responsible waste disposal, identify vulnerable households and communicate early-warning information. Communities with a history of flooding should work with relevant authorities to document recurring risks and advocate for preventive interventions.
- **Estate Leadership, Residents Associations and Property Managers:** Regularly inspect and maintain estate drainage systems, ensure that waste does not obstruct

³ <https://eaglefm.ng/sewage-blocked-drains-worsen-abuja-flooding-fg/>

drainage channels, discourage unauthorised alterations and encroachments to waterways and promptly report drainage failures and flood risks. Estate leadership should also establish basic emergency communication and evacuation arrangements for residents.

- **CSOs:** Play an active role in community sensitisation, independent monitoring, early-warning research, dissemination, documentation of affected communities and advocacy for accountable disaster response. Civil society should work with communities to identify recurring flood risks and ensure that residents' experiences inform government planning and policy.
- **Businesses and Property Owners:** Keep premises, access roads and adjoining drainage channels free from waste and obstruction. Businesses should develop basic emergency plans, particularly where they operate in flood-prone locations.
- **Citizens and Residents of Abuja:** Every resident has a role to play. Do not dump refuse into drains, waterways, or flood channels. Keep drainage areas around homes and businesses clear. Do not attempt to drive or walk through fast-flowing or flooded roads. Move to higher ground when evacuation warnings are issued. Do not use floodwater for drinking, cooking, or other domestic purposes. Report blocked drains, dangerous waterways and flood emergencies promptly. Check on vulnerable neighbours and rely on verified information from FEMD, FEMA, NEMA, NiHSA and other relevant authorities. Residents should also take additional precautions if they live, work or travel through areas with a known history of flooding. FEMD has advised residents to remain alert and report emergencies through the **112 toll-free emergency number**⁴.

NEMA's activation of a National Emergency Operations Centre for the 2026 flood response⁵ is an important step towards coordinated disaster management. However, Abuja must move beyond emergency response to prevention, preparedness and risk reduction. This requires regular drainage maintenance, protection of waterways, enforcement of planning regulations, responsible waste disposal, effective early-warning systems, flood-risk mapping and investment in climate-resilient infrastructure. Communities with a history of flooding must receive extra attention and preventive measures before the next rainfall. The water may recede, but the warning remains. IRIAD, through its **Environment, Sustainability and Natural Resource Governance Programme**, emphasises that preventing and reducing the impact of flooding in Abuja is a **shared responsibility**. We call on government, community heads, estate leadership, businesses, CSOs, development partners and residents to work together to build a safer and more climate resilient FCT.

IRIAD is strengthening public sensitisation and advocacy on flood prevention and preparedness, environmental responsibility and accountable urban governance, and will advocate for stronger enforcement of environmental and urban planning regulations, while promoting collaboration among government agencies, communities, civil society organisations, environmental groups and emergency-response institutions. Through evidence-based advocacy, IRIAD will support policies

⁴ <https://punchng.com/fg-issues-fresh-flood-warning-to-26-states-fct/>

⁵ <https://nema.gov.ng/nema-dg-activates-national-emergency-operations-centre-for-2026-flood-response/>

that address the root causes of recurring flooding and prioritise prevention over reactive emergency response.

IRIAD also recognises the urgent need for adequate resources and support for affected communities. Those impacted may require safe shelter, clean water, food, medicines, sanitation supplies and emergency assistance, with relief and recovery efforts prioritising children, older persons, persons with disabilities, low-income households and other vulnerable groups.

Flood prevention is a collective responsibility. Abuja must be a city where rainfall is managed, not feared. We must act together before the next flood.

#TogetherAgainstFlooding #ProtectOurCommunities #BuildResilientFCT
#ClimateActionNow #ClimateResilience #ProtectFCTProtectLivelihoods
#UrbanDevelopmentAndGovernance #EnvironmentAndSustainableDevelopment

Signed

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ABOUT IRIAD

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD)** is an interdisciplinary knowledge, policy, and advocacy hub committed to developing a critical understanding of governance processes and regimes through research, documentation, policy engagement, public education, and impact advocacy to inform policies, advocacies, and other forms of interventions. Whilst promoting and encouraging active citizenship through citizens' engagement, participation, and representation in democratic governance.

IRIAD is committed to strengthening democratic governance by advancing public accountability, citizens' participation, women's rights and gender justice, and strengthening the capacities of governance institutions to be responsive, responsible, accountable, effective, and ethical

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