



## Highlights

- Heavy rains experienced in February and early March 2014
- Floods cause devastation in several parts of the region
- Cholera outbreak spread to more areas in Namibia

## Rainfall Performance

### Heavy rains cause floods in several parts of the region in early March

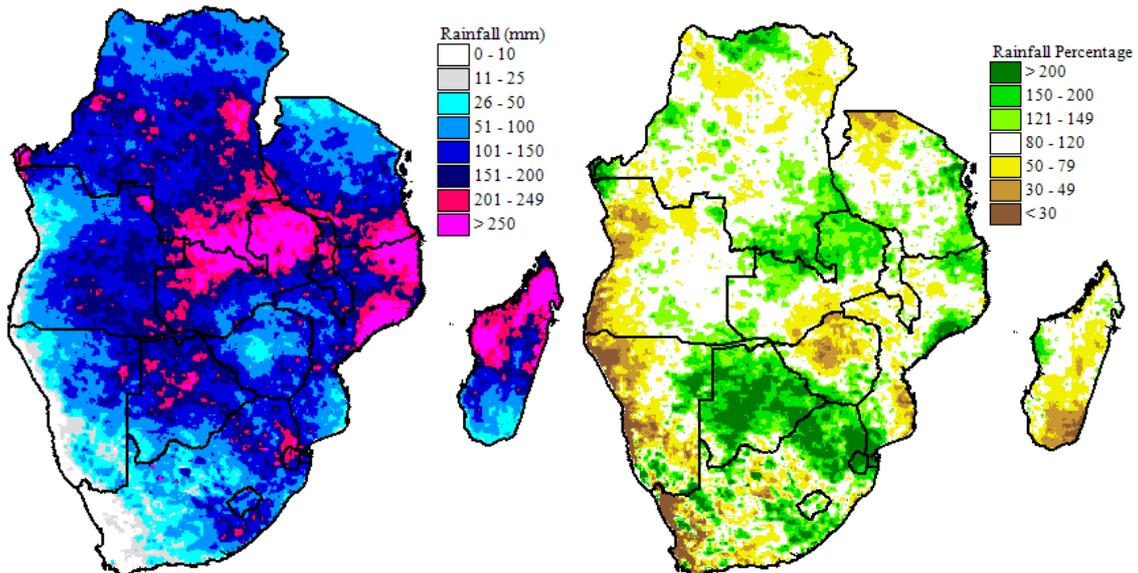


Figure 1: Left: Rainfall Totals for February 11 to March 10, 2014; Right: Rainfall Totals compared with average; *Source: USGS/FEWSNET*

Heavy rains were received in the period February 11 to March 10 in some parts of the region, including northern South Africa, Botswana, central and northern Mozambique, western and northern Zambia, northern Malawi, and southern Tanzania. Total rainfall received was significantly above average in most of these areas, especially Botswana and South Africa. Widespread floods resulted from these rains in the many parts of Mozambique and northern parts of South Africa. Some localised flooding was also reported in Zambia, Namibia, and Swaziland.

## Floods update

### Mozambique

Reports from the country indicated that due to heavy rains in the past few weeks, seven river basins are on alert, including Pungué, Zambeze, Limpopo, Messalo, Lugenda, Incomáti and Maputo, due to high river levels and possible riverine flooding.

So far this season, authorities have reported a number of casualties associated with heavy rains, flooding and lightning strikes. Flooding has reportedly affected more than 20,000 hectares of crops, with more than 8,000 hectares being lost completely, affecting more than 15,000 rural households. It was also reported that around 1,700 houses had been destroyed, and almost 6,000 damaged.

Central Sofala is so far the worst affected after the Pungué River burst its banks late last week, cutting road access between Beira and Zimbabwe border. People living near the Licungo river near the coast have left the area voluntarily to seek shelter in temporary camps set up during the 2013 flood season. Reports indicated that around 9,000 people were at risk in the lower Licungo basin, where the river had already flooded some villages.

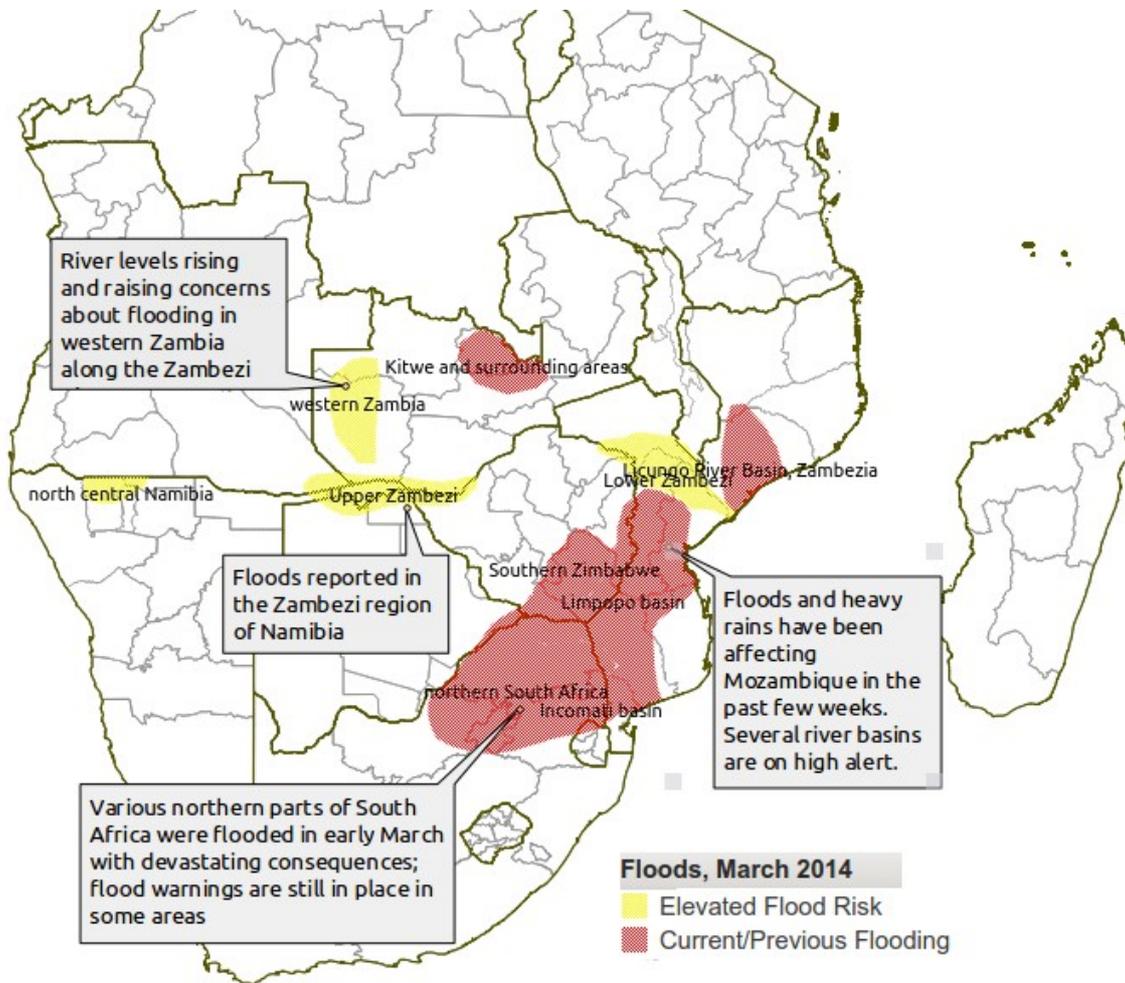


## South Africa

Heavy rains in February and early March led to flooding in several locations in South Africa. Reports from the country indicated that North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal were the provinces hardest hit by heavy rain and flooding. Two dams burst their banks in the Limpopo province and led to extensive flooding, which led to some casualties and mass evacuations. The flooding around the country cost the lives of more than 30 people, with around 25 drownings, and also led to destruction of infrastructure (roads and railways) and forced widespread evacuations in the northern and north western parts of the country. Electricity power generation was also temporarily affected and disturbed when rains resulted in too much moisture in the coal used at thermal power plants. It was reported that more than 300mm of rain had been received in some parts of the country in early March.

The heavy rains also led to overflowing of the Vaal Dam, which lies on the Vaal River, which is one of South Africa's strongest-flowing rivers. **Floods warnings have been issued** for communities downstream of the Vaal Dam, Orange River and other areas around the countries which are known to be flood prone.

Assessments of the losses due to the heavy rains and flooding are still ongoing. According to the SA Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors, the construction industry in South Africa lost revenue estimated at R50m (US\$5m) to R100m (US\$10m) per day because of delays associated with the heavy rains and flooding.





# Regional DRR Update

Volume 4 - March 20th, 2014



## Namibia

Reports from Namibia indicated that heavy rainfall in the upper Zambezi Basin have caused flooding in the Zambezi region of Namibia. The Zambezi Regional Council, assisted by the Red Cross, are providing aid and relief, including mosquito nets, drinking water and temporary accommodation, for those affected in the areas of Makolonga, Mazoba, Sibbinda and Linyathi.

Heavy rains are expected to continue and there is a threat for more widespread flooding along the Zambezi river. The Namibia Hydrological Services department has reported that perennial rivers continue to rise significantly.

There are also concerns about the **possibility of flooding in the north-central regions** of the country. Local media reported that heavy rains led to localised flooding in the Omusati region in the north, bordering Angola, and that 10 schools had been affected and forced to close by flooding in the region. There are fears that the situation may deteriorate as floodwaters travel downstream from Angola. There were reports of heavy rains in the area and in upstream areas in Angola. Moderate to heavy rains are forecast over the region during the next week, and this could worsen conditions on the ground.

## Swaziland

Heavy rains affecting South Africa and Mozambique over the last two weeks have also caused damage and casualties in Swaziland, mainly in the Incomati Basin which is shared by the three countries. Bridges and roads have been damaged by the resulting floods, with at least ten rivers overflowing. Reports from the country indicated that eight people had died in flood-related incidents in various parts of the kingdom.

## Zambia

Heavy rains over the past two to three weeks have resulted floods in the north-central parts of Zambia, with the most affected area being Kitwe where the heavy rains and floods have destroyed houses, damaged infrastructure and displaced local residents. Rainfall forecasts predict continuing rains in the area and this raises the threat for further flooding over many parts of the area.

In the western part of Zambia, consistent and above-average rains over the past several weeks have raised the Zambezi River level near its flooding level. There is **an elevated risk of flooding in the area** and also for downstream areas as moderate to heavy rains are forecast to persist during the next week.

## Zimbabwe

There are concerns that increasing population at a holding camp for Zimbabwe's flood victims is putting strain on facilities and resources, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported. About 2,500 families were evacuated to the camp from areas threatened by flooding in the areas along the Tokwe river. They are reportedly living in "precarious conditions with water, food and medicine shortages". In its latest statement, OCHA says current maize food stocks are expected to run out at the end of March. Officials are also concerned about the threat of a major disease outbreak and say that there is a need for animal vaccinations and adequate drugs. The Government of Zimbabwe has appealed for over \$20 million of aid to assist the flood victims.

Meanwhile, reports say more than 100 houses were destroyed by heavy rains in rural areas of the Matabeleland North province, leaving large numbers of families homeless. Authorities are still assessing the situation there.



## Health

### Cholera Update

#### Namibia

The cholera outbreak in Namibia which began in November last year, spread over more northern parts of the country. So far, the disease has been reported in Opuwo District, Kunene Region; Tsandi District, Omusati Region; Oshakati District, Oshana Region; Engela District, Ohangwena Region; Okahandja District, Otjozondjupa Region and Windhoek District, Khomas Region. The most affected is Opuwo, the capital Kunene province. In mid-February new cases of cholera were reported in the capital Windhoek, particularly the area of Katutura, but it is believed to be a different cholera strain from the one in the north. By late February, the number of cholera cases nationwide was nearly 550, with 19 deaths.

To contain the disease, Government and its partners has deployed teams to educate the public on cholera management and has stocked public medical facilities with all the relevant medications for cholera.

Cholera outbreaks have also been plaguing **southern Angola's Cunene province** since last year, but is is believed that health authorities have the situation under control.

