



alert



FAO AND IGAD WARN: FLOODING AND RAINFALL INCREASE RIFT VALLEY FEVER THREAT ACROSS EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

10 April 2026

Key facts:

1. Rift Valley fever (RVF) is an acute, vector-borne, viral and zoonotic disease that has severe impacts on livelihoods, national and international markets, and human health.
2. The disease has been observed in sheep, goats, cattle, buffaloes, camels and humans and is spread primarily by mosquitoes and the movement of animals.
3. Heavy rains and prolonged flooding increase habitat suitability for vector populations, determining massive hatching of RVF competent mosquitoes (e.g. *Aedes* and *Culex*), thus influencing the risk of RVF emergence, transmission and spread.
4. The dynamic prediction model calibrated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) builds upon the work by Anyamba *et al.* (2009, 2010), which utilizes vegetation and rainfall anomalies as a proxy for ecological dynamics to map areas at potential risk of RVF in Eastern Africa.
5. The FAO RVF Early Warning panel of experts verifies the risk areas with the experts on the ground and assesses if conditions warrant an RVF alert.
6. RVF outbreaks can disrupt the livestock sector in depleting the future generation of affected herds causing massive abortions and therefore constitutes an important socio-economic and food security threat to vulnerable households. In addition, it can also affect the funds directly available to households through their animals and impact their capacities to access health care and child education. Moreover, it can result in a trade ban and can affect national and regional economies.

La Niña conditions are driving above-average rainfall and widespread flooding across Eastern and Southern Africa, creating favourable conditions for RVF virus transmission. Saturated soils and standing water enhance mosquito vector proliferation, increasing the outbreak risk and complicating early detection and control efforts. Flooding further constrains veterinary service delivery, disrupts livestock movements, and damages pasture and infrastructure.

The FAO [RVF Early Warning Decision Support Tool \(RVF DST\)](#) continuously monitor environmental drivers of vector amplification to support risk assessment, early warning and risk-based surveillance across Africa. Based on the RVF DST forecast for April 2026, FAO and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) underscore the need to urgently strengthen preparedness, surveillance, and control measures to safeguard animal and human health in the region.

The RVF DST can be accessed here: <https://data.apps.fao.org/rvf/?lang=en>.

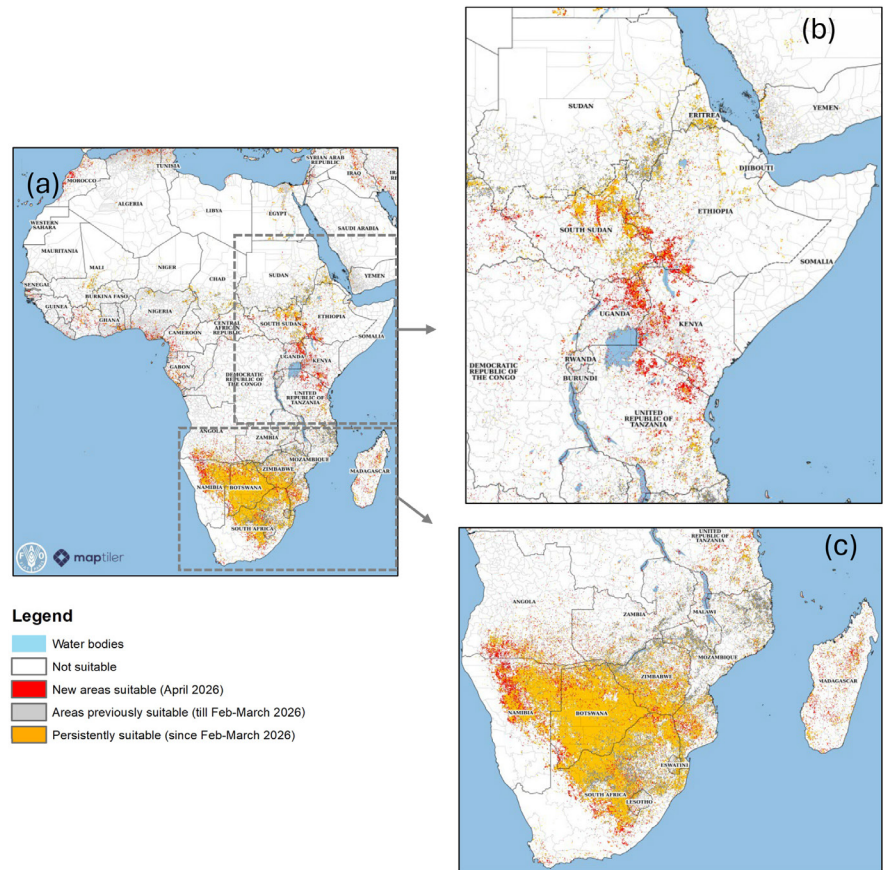
HIGHLIGHTS

- **Eastern Africa: Torrential rainfall** over the past weeks has affected the southern **Kenya** and **United Republic of Tanzania** and to a lesser extent **Burundi, southern Ethiopia** and **Rwanda**, with flooding continuing in the Sudd wetlands of **South Sudan**. These conditions raise the risk of flooding, landslides, and livestock diseases (including water-borne and vector-borne diseases). Combined with forecasted above-average rainfall for April–May, **the risk of Rift Valley fever (RVF) outbreaks is elevated in these countries.**
- **Southern Africa: Above-average rainfall** over the recent months has led to **flooding** in **Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia**, and more recently, in southern Angola and northeastern Namibia. Continued **heavy rainfall** is forecast for these countries, as well as Eswatini and Lesotho, and is expected to sustain **flood conditions**, disrupting livestock mobility, pasture access, and veterinary service delivery, and thereby **maintaining elevated RVF risk**. In contrast, ongoing dry conditions in western and central Angola, parts of Madagascar, central Mozambique, and eastern Zimbabwe may exacerbate feed and water constraints for livestock.

Useful links

- ▶ FAO. 2022. [Rift Valley fever action framework](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2021. [Driving preparedness and anticipatory actions through innovation: A web-based Rift Valley fever Early Warning Decision Support Tool.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2019. [Real-time monitoring and forecasting of Rift Valley fever in Africa.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2018. [Rift Valley fever surveillance.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2003. [Recognizing Rift Valley fever.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2002. [Preparation of Rift Valley fever contingency plans.](#)
- ▶ Anyamba, *et al.* 2009. [Prediction of a Rift Valley fever outbreak. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 106\(3\):955-959.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2023. [What you need to know about Rift Valley Fever \[video\].](#)
- ▶ FAO. n.d. [Introduction to Rift Valley Fever open access.](#)
- ▶ Pittiglio, *et al.* 2024. [Real-time disease risk monitoring and forecasting for early action. 12th International Conference on Agro-Geoinformatics, Novi Sad, Serbia, 2024, pp. 1-5.](#)
- ▶ FAO. 2025. [EMPRES Animal Health 360 No. 49/2025.](#)

Figure 1. (a) Forecasted risk of RVF vector amplification for April 2026 in Africa. Insets show the risk in (b) Eastern and (c) Southern Africa.



Source: UN, 2020 modified with the data from the FAO web-based RVF Early Warning Decision Support Tool, April 2026 (RVF DST).

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. Final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

FAO AND IGAD RECOMMENDATIONS

Countries at risk are urged to **heighten RVF preparedness** and implement the following measures:

- **Strengthen preparedness and coordination** by updating contingency plans, training staff, and reinforcing One Health collaboration across animal, human, and environmental sectors.
- **Enhance surveillance and early detection** through sentinel herds, active surveillance, and community-based reporting in high-risk areas.
- **Implement preventive measures** such as targeted vaccination, animal movement control, quarantine for imports, safe slaughter practices, and vector control, while ensuring protection of field staff including strategic pre-positioning of vaccines, insecticides, and emergency response supplies in high-risk zones.
- **Improve risk communication and community engagement** by disseminating clear, culturally appropriate messages through schools, media, and community leaders while also promoting behavior change practices such as use of mosquito nets, repellents, and avoidance of contact with sick animals.

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COUNTRIES ARE URGED TO ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- **Risk mapping and communication:** Staff at all levels (from national to local) are aware of specific **high-risk areas** and have access to updated risk maps and guidance.
- **Preparedness and planning:** A national RVF contingency plan with clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for outbreak control is in place, endorsed, and ready for activation, including laboratory diagnostic and vector control capacities.
- **Capacity and training:** Veterinary and public health personnel are adequately trained and equipped to implement the contingency plan and conduct passive and active surveillance, especially in high-risk areas.
- **Safety and protection:** Personal protective equipment (PPE) and biosafety measures are available and implemented for first responders, field teams, laboratory staff, and slaughterhouse personnel.
- **Community awareness, communication and outreach:** Targeted actions are undertaken to raise awareness among livestock stakeholders and the public on RVF prevention, early reporting of animal abortions or deaths, and personal protection measures. Schools, community organizations and local leaders are actively engaged in these campaigns. Authorities should develop clear, culturally appropriate communication materials – using print, radio, and digital platforms – and disseminate them through trusted community channels to ensure wide reach and impact, while also promoting behavior change practices such as use of mosquito nets, repellents, and avoidance of contact with sick animals.

For any inquiries related to this subject, including requests for technical support or information on at-risk areas, please contact FAO (empres-animal-health@fao.org, FAO-RAF@fao.org) or IGAD (icpald@igad.int).

