

An evacuation directive has been passed by the Lagos State government to residents residing in flood-prone and low-lying communities, following a seven-day flood alert by the Nigerian Hydrological Services Agency (NiHSA).

This information was disclosed by the state's Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Tokunbo Wahab who said that the residents are to move to higher grounds to prevent the loss of lives and property.

According to the statement, the alert by NiSHA which was issued over the weekend affects 15 states, including Imo, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Benue, Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Enugu, Bayelsa, Kogi, Abia, Taraba, Rivers and Lagos. It covered areas of the Lagos including Eti-Osa, Lagos Island, Oke-Ira Nla in Ajah, Kirikiri, Ilaje Waterfront Jetty and Jetty Terminal B.

The Commissioner added that the flood advisory is being handled with utmost importance with the highlighted locations and other riverine, low-lying, and flood-prone communities under tightened observation.

Furthermore, he advised that heightened caution should be exercised in communities around the Ogun River and other major waterways as rainfall intensity and rising water levels in connected river systems could affect downstream communities in Lagos.

Wahab warned that Isheri North, Kara, Itowolo, Ajegunle, Majidun, Ogolonto, parts of Agboyi, and other settlements downstream of Isheri Olofin should remain on high alert between 19 and 25 September.

Residents were urged to take action in advance, not waiting until floodwaters rise before taking action, noting that early preparation and temporary relocation could prevent irrecoverable loss.

"We are urging Lagosians, particularly those living in flood-prone and low-lying areas, not to take this warning lightly. When the signs point to danger, the safest decision is to move early. No property is worth risking a life," He said.

The same advise was issued to residents living close to rivers, lagoons, wetlands, drainage channels, as well as other water bodies to monitor official flood forecasts and be prepared for temporary relocation when necessary as the report warned that rising river levels could lead to flooding in vulnerable communities, affecting

essential facilities, such as schools, healthcare centres, markets, farms, and places of worship.

In the same vein, the Commissioner called on governments, emergency management agencies, community leaders, and residents who were affected by the report to provide early-warning and response mechanisms, urging the movement of people, livestock, and valuable possessions to safer locations where necessary.

Additionally, he reassured that monitoring of river levels, rainfall patterns, and other hydrological developments in by the state government, in collaboration with relevant federal agencies would remain in place with proper waste management efforts across the state also sustained.

Wahab appealed to residents to support the government's flood mitigation efforts by ensuring proper waste disposal, cautioning residents against walking or driving through flooded roads and medians.

The Commissioner emphasized that the protection of lives and property remained the government's topmost priority, urging residents to treat flood forecasts as critical.