

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR KANO STATE

EDITORIAL NOTE

Every year, flooding reshapes life across Nigeria — flooding farmlands, endangering agricultural yield, displacing communities, closing schools, and cutting off roads. The Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) has mapped what 2026 will look like, and the picture is clear: with the right preparation, communities can absorb what is coming without catastrophe. We know this because 2025 proved it. Early warning and organised community action reduced flood fatalities by 76% and displaced persons by 84% compared to 2024 (ref). The goal for 2026 is to go further.

The flood year follows a predictable rhythm, and that predictability is a gift. The early rains of April through June give communities a window to act — clearing drainage channels, reinforcing riverbanks, and registering households for alerts — before the peak season intensifies in July, August, and September. By the time October and November arrive, the heaviest rains may have eased, but water that fell months earlier in Adamawa and Cameroon is still travelling downstream toward the delta states. Communities in Anambra, Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers need to stay vigilant well into November, long after they might assume the danger has passed.

The Communities That Need the Most Support:

Ten states face the sharpest risk in 2026: Kogi, Niger, Delta, Anambra, Benue, Kebbi, Rivers, Bayelsa, Adamawa, and Cross River but the threat is not abstract. Across Nigeria, 30,707 communities are at risk, along with 4,792 health facilities and 10,684 schools. When a health centre floods, patients lose access to care. When a school fills with water, children lose months of learning. These are the human costs that preparation can prevent.

In Kogi, where the Niger and Benue rivers meet at Lokoja, riverine flooding can isolate entire communities for weeks. Local governments there should be identifying high ground now,

designating safe assembly points, and making sure every community has a marked escape route. In Benue, the low-lying areas around Makurdi need the same attention before the Benue River crests. In Port Harcourt and other urban settings, where poor urban drainage compounds river and tidal flooding, the single most impactful community action is also the simplest — keeping drains clear of refuse.

With 4.2 million hectares of farmland at risk, agriculture sits at the centre of the 2026 challenge. Planting early-maturing crop varieties and using ridges or mounds instead of flat planting beds reduces both waterlogging damage and the risk of a total harvest loss. Staggered planting — sowing in batches rather than all at once means that if one batch is hit by flooding, others survive. Harvesting before October, and storing produce in elevated spaces away from floodwater, protects what has already been grown.

For northern farming communities, the challenge runs deeper, because the flood season is immediately followed by a severe dry period from December through February. The practical response is to treat flood season not only as a threat but as an opportunity — storing water in tanks, drums, and ponds during the wet months to carry livestock and households through the drought that follows.

The infrastructure of flood resilience is not complicated. It is community flood wardens who know which households have elderly or disabled residents and can reach them first. It is local radio stations broadcasting NIHSA alerts in local languages so that fishermen and farmers in remote areas receive warnings in time to act. It is traditional rulers and community leaders who have identified, in advance, which road out of the community stays passable longest. It is households that keep a small emergency kit — water purification tablets, key documents, basic medicine — packed and accessible before the rains arrive.

None of this requires waiting for government. Communities that prepare themselves reduce their own losses and make it easier for relief to reach those who need it most when flooding does occur.

Where local government is active and well-coordinated, the difference in outcomes is measurable.

The priorities for 2026 are straightforward: clear primary drainage channels before April, pre-position food and medical supplies in high-risk areas before July, and ensure that development permits are not issued for floodplain land. These are not expensive interventions. They are largely organisational — a matter of doing in advance what would otherwise be done in crisis.

Nigeria has 30,707 communities, 10,684 schools, and 4,792 health facilities in the path of the 2026 flood season. Each one is also a community that has survived flooding before, that has knowledge of its own landscape, and that can act. The science has been done. The warnings have been issued. What happens next depends on what communities, local governments, and individuals choose to do with this information — starting now, while there is still time.

Source: Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) 2026 Annual Flood Outlook

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN KANO IN 2026

Kano State faces a very serious and unique situation in 2026. You have two major problems to deal with: **flooding** during the rainy season and **severe drought** during the dry season. This is what the AFO calls **compound risk** — too much water followed by too little water in the same year.

Why is Kano so vulnerable? Three big reasons:

First, Kano has several rivers and streams. The Jakara River, Gamu Stream, and other waterways flow through the state, including through Kano City. When heavy rains fall, these waterways swell and overflow into nearby communities.

Second, Kano is in the Chad Basin zone. The AFO places Kano in Hydrological Area VIII (Chad Basin). This means the state is affected by the Lake Chad basin water system.

Third, Kano has serious urban flooding problems. Kano City is a major urban center with many drainage channels that are often blocked with garbage. When heavy rain falls, water pools on roads and enters homes. The AFO specifically lists Kano among the Urban Flood Hotspots.

The Three Flood Periods for Kano:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rains begin. Rivers and streams start to rise. Urban areas with blocked drains see flash floods.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains fill up rivers and streams. Flooding spreads to low-lying communities. Urban flooding worsens.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues. Water from the Sahel catchment moves through the state. Late-season crops are at risk.	Medium to High



WHICH PARTS OF KANO ARE AT RISK

Kano State falls within **Hydrological Area VIII (Chad Basin)** . This means Kano is in the same flood zone as Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Bauchi, and parts of Adamawa and Katsina.

By the numbers (from NIHSA for HA-VIII):

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VIII which includes Kano)	What This Means for Kano
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Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VIII which includes Kano)	What This Means for Kano
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	4,441 communities (for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Yobe combined)	Early flooding begins in some areas.
JAS (July-August-September)	High	8,149 communities (for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Yobe combined)	This is the peak. Widespread flooding across the state.
ON (October-November)	High	6,470 communities (for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Yobe combined)	Late flooding continues.

Annual total for Kano: Kano is among the states with High Flood Risk in all three seasons. Many communities across the state will see flooding in 2026.

For roads: The AFO's road risk table (Table 4.26) lists Kano with **55 road sections** at risk of flooding in 2026.

THE URBAN FLOOD HOTSPOT: KANO CITY

The AFO lists Kano as one of Nigeria's **Urban Flood Hotspots** for 2026.

Rank	State	Specific Location	Main Flood Cause	Risk Level
10	Kano	Kano City	Flash flooding; Jakara and Gamu stream overflow; blocked drainage	Medium

What this means for Kano City:

- The **Jakara River** and **Gamu Stream** will overflow their banks during heavy rains
- Urban drainage channels are blocked with garbage and debris
- Water will pool on roads and enter homes and businesses
- Low-lying neighborhoods near the Jakara River and Gamu Stream are at highest risk
- The AFO specifically mentions "blocked drainage" as a major cause — this means blocked drains are a serious problem

If you live in Kano City, especially in low-lying areas near the Jakara River or Gamu Stream, you must take flooding seriously in 2026.

THE JAKARA RIVER AND GAMU STREAM: YOUR MAIN FLOOD DANGERS

The Jakara River and Gamu Stream flow through Kano City and surrounding areas. These waterways are relatively small, but when heavy rains fall, they can rise quickly and flood nearby communities.

What you should know about the Jakara River and Gamu Stream:

- They are fed by rainfall from the Kano region
- When heavy rain falls, water levels can rise very quickly (flash flooding)
- Many sections of these waterways have been blocked or narrowed by development and garbage
- Low-lying communities along these waterways are at highest risk

What to do if you live near these waterways:

- Know the nearest high ground. Where will you go if the water rises?
- Pay attention to NIHSA warnings. Do not ignore them.
- Clear the drainage channels in your neighborhood. Blocked drains make flooding worse.
- **Do not throw garbage into streams or drains.** This is the number one cause of urban flooding in Kano.
- If you see the water rising unusually high, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.

THE DROUGHT PROBLEM IN KANO (COMPOUND RISK)

Kano has a serious problem that southern states do not face. It is called **compound risk** — too much water followed by too little water in the same year.

Period	What Will Happen	What This Means for You
Wet Season (April-September)	Moderately Dry conditions	Even during the rainy season, Kano does not get as much rain as southern states. There is already water scarcity in many areas.
Flood Season (JAS-ON)	Medium to High flood risk	When rain does come, it can come hard and fast. Water rushes through streams and floods low-lying areas. This causes flash flooding in Kano City.
Dry Season (December-February)	Very Dry conditions	This is severe. Rivers and streams will decline sharply. Some waterways may have very little water by December and January.

What this means for Kano farmers and herders:

- Your crops may be damaged or destroyed by flood during JAS-ON period
- Then you may struggle to find water for your animals and household in December-February
- You must plan for BOTH too much water and too little water in the same year

The AFO states for the North-West zone (which includes Kano):

"Communities relying on these rivers for domestic water supply and livestock watering will require managed water supply interventions."

In simple words: By December and January, water will be much harder to find. The government and aid organizations may need to help with water supply. Do not rely only on outside help. Store water yourself.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN KANO

Kano is a major agricultural state, known for maize, sorghum, millet, rice, groundnuts, cotton, and vegetables. Here is how different crops will be affected.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches. Second season maize is risky.
Sorghum	JAS and ON	Sorghum is a key crop in Kano. The ON period flood (October-November) can destroy sorghum still in the field. Plant early-maturing varieties. Harvest before October if possible.
Millet	JAS and ON	Millet is drought-tolerant but does not like standing water. Plant on raised beds or ridges in areas that flood. Early-maturing varieties are safer.
Rice (lowland areas, especially in the Hadejia-Jama'are system)	JAS and ON	Rice can handle water, but too much will drown it. Plant early-maturing varieties. Clear drainage channels.
Cowpea	JAS (July-September)	Choose early-maturing varieties. Plant in April-May. Harvest before the peak flood arrives in August-September.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Groundnuts	ON (October-November)	Groundnuts are at risk during late flooding. Harvest early or plant in areas away from floodplains.
Cotton	JAS and ON	Cotton does not like wet feet. Plant on ridges. Harvest before October if possible.
Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, onions)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. Onions do not like wet feet — plant on ridges. During the dry season, you will need irrigation.
Wheat (dry season crop)	Dry season (December-March)	Wheat is grown in the dry season under irrigation. The Very Dry conditions mean you will need to ensure adequate water supply for irrigation.

Special note for Kano farmers:

Because Kano is in **High Flood Risk** during JAS, you will see significant flooding in low-lying agricultural areas. But remember, you also face **Moderately Dry** conditions overall — meaning not enough rain for some crops. You must manage water carefully.

The main dangers are:

1. **Flash flooding** in low-lying fields (sudden water that drowns crops)
2. **Waterlogging** in poorly drained fields
3. **Fungal diseases** in some crops
4. **Late flooding** in ON period destroying late-season crops
5. **Drought** in dry season affecting dry-season crops like wheat

What to do about flooding: Dig drainage channels in your fields. Plant on ridges.

What to do about dry conditions: Capture and store water during the flood season for use in dry season. Consider using drought-tolerant varieties.

WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN KANO MUST DO

The dry season (December to February) is a serious challenge for livestock in Kano. Water will become much harder to find.

For all livestock owners:



Action	When to Do It	Why
Vaccinate all animals	February-March (before rains start)	Disease spreads faster when animals are stressed by flood or drought
Deworm all animals	Start of rains, then again mid-season	Worms and parasites increase in wet conditions
Provide raised housing	Before April	Animals must have dry ground to stand on during floods
Store water for dry season	During flood season (July-October)	THIS IS CRITICAL. By December, water will be much harder to find. Store as much water as you can.
Cut and store fodder	June-September	Grasses will be scarce in dry season. Make hay now.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Identify alternative water sources	Before December	Where will your animals drink when water becomes scarce? Boreholes? Stored water?

For cattle herders in Kano:

- The dry season (December-February) will be **Very Dry**. This is severe.
- Water will become much harder to find. Some streams may have very little water by December and January.
- Identify alternative water sources now. Do not wait until December.
- **Consider reducing herd size** before the dry season if you cannot secure enough water and pasture.
- Plan grazing routes early. Where will you take your cattle when water becomes scarce?
- **Store water in tanks, drums, or constructed ponds during July-October.** This water will help your animals in December-February.

For goat and sheep farmers in Kano:

- Raised housing is essential during flood season. Wet ground causes foot rot and pneumonia.
- Cut and store grasses in June, July, and August. Use these during the dry season (December-February).
- Pregnant and lactating females need priority feeding during dry periods.
- During the August dry spell (little dry season), use stored feed to keep animals healthy.
- **Store water** for your small ruminants. They need less water than cattle, but they still need water.

For poultry farmers in Kano:

- During hot months (March-May), reduce bird numbers per cage. Do not overcrowd.
- Improve ventilation in poultry houses.
- Feed during cooler hours (early morning, late evening).
- Add electrolytes and vitamins to drinking water.
- During heavy rains, ensure housing is leak-proof.

- **During dry season, ensure birds have constant access to water.** Water may be scarce, but birds cannot survive without it.

For fish farmers in Kano:

Fish farming is practiced in Kano, especially in areas with access to water.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Strengthen pond walls and embankments	Before heavy rains (March-June)	Floodwaters can wash away weak walls. Your fish will escape.
Clear drainage channels	Before April	Prevent overflow into your ponds from surrounding water
Install screens or netting at water inlets	Before April	Stop debris from entering and stop fish from escaping
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly
Monitor water levels	Throughout dry season	Water levels may drop. Consider partial harvest if ponds get too low.

THE AUGUST DRY SPELL (LITTLE DRY SEASON)

Kano may experience a reduction in rainfall around August (the "August Break").

What to do during the August dry spell:

- Store water in tanks, drums, or ponds during July for use in August

- Use stored fodder for livestock if grasses dry up
 - If you have vegetable farms, be prepared to water them if rain stops
 - Do not assume the dry spell means the flood season is over. Flooding can return in September and continue into ON period.
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THE ROAD DISRUPTION WARNING

Kano has **55 road sections** at risk of flooding in 2026.

What this means:

- Many roads will become impassable during the flood season, especially in low-lying areas and near streams
- Major roads in and around Kano City will be affected
- You may not be able to travel between communities
- Markets may become inaccessible
- Emergency services may not reach you quickly

What you should do:

- Stock up on essential supplies (food, medicine, fuel) before the flood peak (by late September)
- If you need to travel for work or market, plan your trips before September
- Identify alternative routes before roads are flooded
- Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road closures

WHAT TO DO IF FLOODING COMES

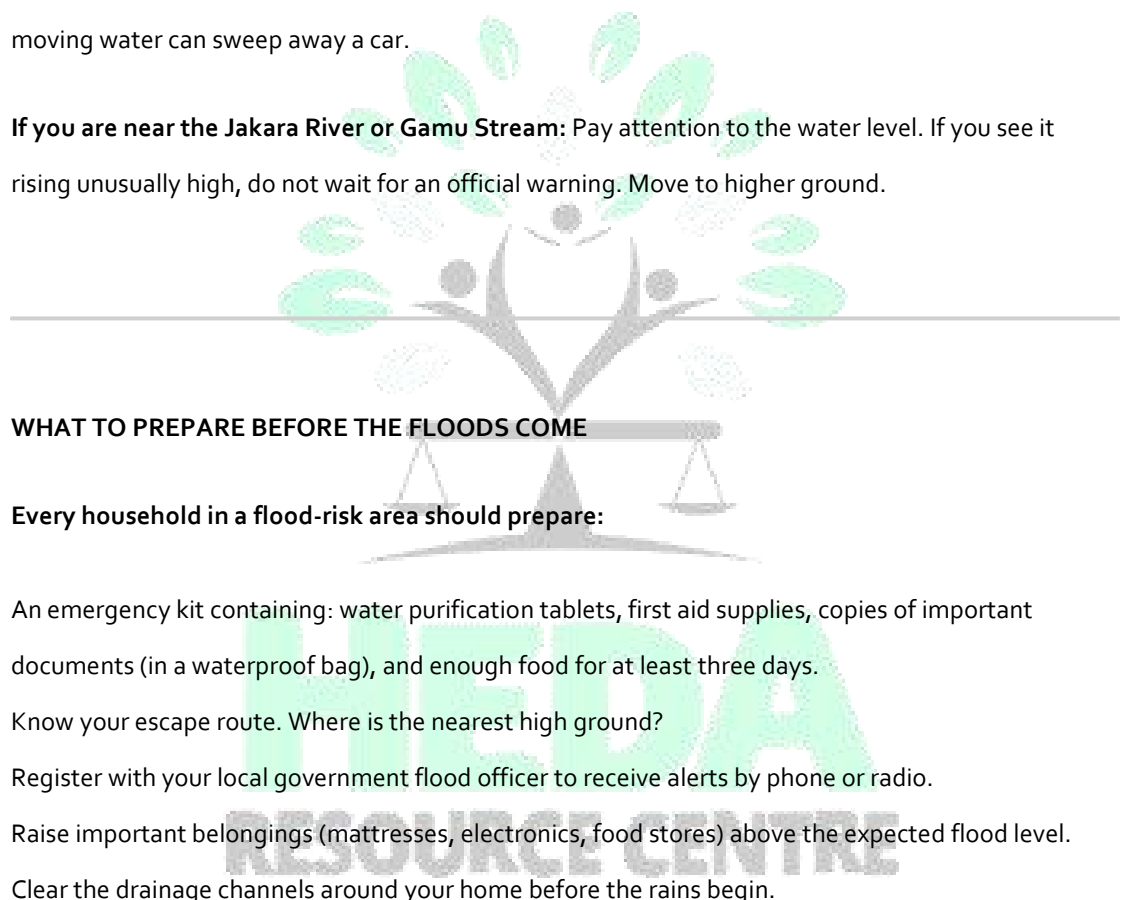
When NIHSA or NEMA sends a High Flood Risk warning:

1. **Leave immediately.** Do not wait to see the water.
2. Move to the designated safe place in your community (high ground).

3. **Do not try to walk through moving floodwater.** It can sweep you away.
4. If it is safe, switch off electricity at the mains before leaving.
5. Take your emergency kit, important documents, and any medicines you need.
6. Make sure all family members are accounted for — especially children and elderly people.
7. Report to your local government flood officer or community flood warden.
8. **For livestock:** Move animals to higher ground before the water arrives. Do not wait.

If you are in Kano City: Pay attention to local flooding. If you see water pooling on roads, do not attempt to drive through it. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. One foot of moving water can sweep away a car.

If you are near the Jakara River or Gamu Stream: Pay attention to the water level. If you see it rising unusually high, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.



WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE FLOODS COME

Every household in a flood-risk area should prepare:

- An emergency kit containing: water purification tablets, first aid supplies, copies of important documents (in a waterproof bag), and enough food for at least three days.
- Know your escape route. Where is the nearest high ground?
- Register with your local government flood officer to receive alerts by phone or radio.
- Raise important belongings (mattresses, electronics, food stores) above the expected flood level.
- Clear the drainage channels around your home before the rains begin.
- **Do not throw garbage into drains or streams.** This is the most important thing you can do to prevent urban flooding.

For farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Dig drainage channels in low-lying fields. Plant early-maturing varieties.

For livestock owners: Identify high ground where you can move animals during flooding. **Store water and fodder for the dry season.**

THE DROUGHT PREPARATION YOU NEED (DECEMBER-FEBRUARY)

Because Kano faces **Very Dry** conditions in dry season, you must prepare while there is still water.

This is very important for Kano.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Store water in tanks, drums, or ponds	July-October (flood season)	THIS IS CRITICAL. By December, water will be much harder to find. Store as much as you can.
Cut and store grass for animal feed	June-September	Pasture will be scarce in dry season. Make hay now.
Repair wells and boreholes	Before December	Groundwater levels will drop. Make sure your water source is working.
Reduce herd size if you cannot secure water	October- November	Better to sell animals early than find them struggling from thirst in January.
Coordinate with neighbors on water sharing	Before dry season	Communities that plan together survive better.
Notify local government if your community has no water source	Before December	The AFO says "managed water supply interventions" may be needed. Speak up now.

THE COMPOUND RISK SUMMARY FOR KANO

Here is what the compound flood and drought risk means for Kano:

Risk Type	When It Happens	What You Should Do
Flood risk	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Prepare for flash flooding and urban flooding. Clear drainage. Raise livestock housing. Know your evacuation route. Plant early-maturing crops.
Drought risk	Dry season (December-February)	Store water during flood season. This is very important. Cut and store fodder. Identify alternative water sources.
Compound risk	Both in the same year	You must plan for both. Do not focus only on floods and forget about drought. The drought will come right after the floods.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN KANO

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG

Agency	What They Do	Contact
Kano State SEMA	State-level emergency response	Contact your LGA Agriculture Officer or LGA Chairman for local numbers
NiMet	Weather forecasts	www.nimet.gov.ng
Kano State Urban Planning Authority	Drainage and urban flooding	Ask your LGA chairman for contact information

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR KANO

- **You will see flooding in 2026.** Kano is in High Flood Risk during AMJ, JAS, and ON.
- **The worst months are July, August, and September (JAS).** This is the peak flood season for the state.
- **Kano City is an Urban Flood Hotspot.** The Jakara River and Gamu Stream will overflow. Blocked drains will make flooding worse.
- **Blocked drains are a serious problem in Kano City.** Do not throw garbage into drains or streams. This is the most important thing you can do.
- **55 road sections in Kano are at risk of flooding.** Stock up on supplies before the flood peak.
- **You have compound risk:** Floods in wet season, then **Very Dry** conditions in dry season (December-February). Plan for both.
- **Farmers:** Plant early-maturing varieties. Dig drainage channels. Harvest before October if possible.
- **Livestock owners:** THIS IS CRITICAL. Store water during July-October for the dry season. Cut and store fodder. By December, water will be much harder to find.
- **Dry-season wheat farmers:** Ensure you have adequate water supply for irrigation.

- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit, know your escape route, store water for dry season, and keep your drains clear.

This information comes directly from the NIHSA 2026 Annual Flood Outlook.

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.

