

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR NIGER 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.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN NIGER IN 2026

Niger State is one of the most flood-vulnerable states in all of Nigeria. The government has listed Niger among the **Top 10 States at High Risk** for flooding in 2026.

Why is Niger so vulnerable? Three big reasons:

First, the River Niger flows through the entire western side of the state. The river enters Niger from Kebbi State and flows through major towns like Baro and Jebba before continuing to Kogi. When the Niger swells with water from upstream (Kebbi, and even countries like Mali and Niger), Niger State feels the full force.

Second, Niger State has other major rivers. The Kaduna River flows into the Niger at Muregi. The Gurara River and other waterways also feed into the system. When heavy rains fall, multiple rivers flood at the same time.

Third, Niger State experienced a catastrophic flood in Mokwa on 29 May 2025. The AFO notes that this flood was a "multi-causal disaster" — heavy rainfall combined with infrastructure failures and environmental factors. Learn from 2025. Prepare better in 2026.

The Three Flood Periods for Niger:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rivers begin to rise. Low-lying areas near the Niger River start to see water. Flash floods can happen in towns with blocked drains.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains fill up the Niger River. Water spills onto roads and into communities.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues. Recession flooding from upstream areas affects the state.	Medium to High



THE BARO GAUGE STATION: YOUR EARLY WARNING

NIHSA has a monitoring station at **Baro** on the River Niger. This is an important flood warning station for Niger State.

What Was Recorded in 2025	What Is Expected in 2026
Peak discharge: 6,800 cubic metres per second	Projected peak: 6,200 to 8,100 cubic metres per second
Risk level: High Flood Risk	Risk level: High Flood Risk

Why this matters to you: When the water level at Baro rises above normal, communities along the Niger River in Niger State will flood. Pay attention to NIHSA warnings.

WHICH PARTS OF NIGER ARE AT RISK

Niger State is unique because it falls within **THREE Hydrological Areas**:

- **Hydrological Area I (Niger North)** — northern parts of the state (Sokoto-Rima system)
- **Hydrological Area II (Niger Central)** — central parts of the state (Middle Niger corridor)
- **Hydrological Area VI (Western Littoral)** — parts of the state

By the numbers (from NIHSA across all three HAs):

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HAs that include Niger)	What This Means for Niger
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	2,124 communities (HA-I) + 1,147 communities (HA-II) + 849 communities (HA-VI)	Early flooding begins. Low-lying areas near the Niger River see water.
JAS (July-August-September)	High	2,632 communities (HA-I) + 1,832 communities (HA-II) + 1,195 communities (HA-VI)	This is peak flooding. Widespread inundation along the Niger River corridor.
ON (October-November)	High	2,398 communities (HA-I) + 1,405 communities (HA-II) + 1,024 communities (HA-VI)	Late flooding continues. Recession flooding affects the state.

Annual total for Niger: Niger is among the **Top 10 High Risk States** in Nigeria. Thousands of communities across the state will see flooding in 2026.

For roads: Niger has **87 road sections** identified as at risk of flooding in 2026 (Table 4.26 of the AFO). This is the 6th highest in Nigeria.

THE MOKWA DISASTER: A LESSON FROM 2025

The AFO specifically mentions the catastrophic flooding in **Mokwa, Niger State, on 29 May 2025**.

"Technical assessments conducted by NEMA and the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) categorize the catastrophic flooding in Mokwa, Niger State, on 29 May 2025 as a multi-causal disaster. While heavy rainfall was the primary trigger, a combination of infrastructure failures and environmental factors significantly amplified the damage."

What this means for Niger State in 2026:

- Flooding is not just about rain. Infrastructure failures (broken drains, poorly built roads, dams) can make flooding worse.
- Environmental factors (deforestation, blocked waterways, poor urban planning) also amplify damage.
- The Mokwa flood happened in **May** (AMJ period), not during the peak JAS season. Floods can happen early in the season.
- Learn from Mokwa. Identify weak infrastructure in your area. Clear blocked drains. Report problems to authorities.

WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR NIGER?

The **JAS period (July, August, September)** is the most dangerous for Niger. This is when:

- Heavy rains fall across the Niger River basin
- The Niger River swells and overflows its banks
- The Kaduna River and other tributaries also flood
- Low-lying communities are inundated

The **ON period (October, November)** also carries significant risk. The AFO says:

"In the ON period, Hydrological Area I (Niger North) maintains elevated flood risk as recession waters drain through the river systems."

Do not assume the danger is over after September. Stay alert through November.

THE NIGER RIVER: YOUR MAIN FLOOD DANGER

The Niger River is the dominant waterway in Niger State. It flows along the western side of the state, passing through communities like Baro, Jebba, and Muregi (where the Kaduna River joins).

What you should know about the Niger River in Niger:

- It is fed by rainfall from a wide area, including upstream in Kebbi and even countries like Mali and Niger
- When upstream areas get heavy rain, the river can rise quickly
- Low-lying communities along the river are at highest risk
- The river's floodplain includes many farming areas

What to do if you live near the Niger River:

- Know the nearest high ground. Where will you go if the river rises?
 - Pay attention to NIHSA warnings, especially readings from the Baro gauge station
 - Clear the drainage channels in your neighborhood
 - If you see the river rising unusually high, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.
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THE KADUNA RIVER AND OTHER TRIBUTARIES

The Kaduna River flows into the Niger at Muregi. Other rivers like the Gurara also feed into the system.

What you should know about the Kaduna River:

- It flows through Kaduna State before entering Niger State and joining the Niger at Muregi
- When heavy rains fall in Kaduna State, the water flows down to Niger State
- Communities near the Kaduna River (in areas like Muregi) can flood even if the Niger itself is not high

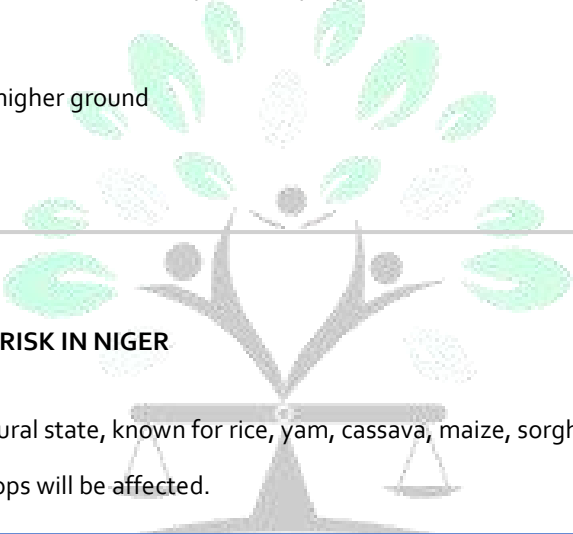
What to do if you live near the Kaduna River or other tributaries:

- Pay attention to rainfall in upstream areas (Kaduna State)
- If you hear that Kaduna has received heavy rain, be prepared for the river to rise in Niger State a few days later
- Have a plan to move to higher ground

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN NIGER

Niger is a major agricultural state, known for rice, yam, cassava, maize, sorghum, and vegetables.

Here is how different crops will be affected.



Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Rice (lowland/fadama)	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Rice is grown along the Niger River floodplain. Plant early-maturing varieties in March-April. Prepare small walls (bunds) to control water. Clear drainage channels. The ON period flood is dangerous — harvest before October if possible.
Yam	JAS (July-September)	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. Harvest before October if possible.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Cassava	JAS and ON	Plant on mounds or ridges. Cassava does not like wet feet. Choose early to medium-maturing varieties (8-12 months).
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches. Second season maize is at risk in ON period.
Sorghum	JAS and ON	Plant early-maturing varieties. Harvest before October if possible.
Soybean	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Choose early-maturing varieties.
Cowpea	JAS (July-September)	Plant early. Harvest before peak flood.
Groundnuts	ON (October-November)	Groundnuts are at risk during late flooding. Harvest early.
Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. Watch for fungal diseases.
Shea butter (harvest from shea trees)	Dry season	Shea trees can tolerate wet conditions, but collection may be disrupted by flooding.

Special note for Niger farmers near the Niger River:

The Niger River floodplain is fertile but dangerous. If you farm in areas near the river (especially in Baro, Jebba, Mokwa, and Muregi areas):

- Plant early-maturing varieties that can be harvested before October
- Build small walls (bunds) around your fields to control water
- Also dig drainage channels so water does not get too deep
- Store harvested crops on high ground, away from the river
- Consider planting some fields further from the river as a backup



WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN NIGER MUST DO

For all livestock owners:

Action	When to Do It	Why
Vaccinate all animals	February-March (before rains start)	Wet ground spreads diseases faster
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. Wet ground causes foot rot and pneumonia.
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?

For cattle herders in Niger:

- The Niger River floodplain is major grazing land, but it is also flood-prone
- During JAS and especially ON (October-November), move cattle away from the river floodplain
- Identify higher ground grazing areas before the flood season
- Store hay and fodder from June-September for use during and after flooding
- **Critical warning:** The October-November flood peak can happen suddenly. Do not wait. Move cattle early.

For goat and sheep farmers in Niger:

- Raised housing is essential during flood season
- Watch for foot rot. If an animal starts limping, treat immediately.
- Cut and store grasses in June, July, and August. Use these during flood season when pasture may be underwater.

For poultry farmers in Niger:

- Reduce the number of birds per cage. Do not overcrowd.
- Open the sides of your poultry house for ventilation.
- Feed during cooler hours (early morning, late evening).
- Add vitamins and electrolytes to drinking water.
- During heavy rains and flooding, ensure housing is raised off the ground and leak-proof.

For fish farmers in Niger:

Action	When to Do It	Why
Strengthen pond walls and embankments	Before heavy rains (March-June)	Floodwaters can wash away weak walls
Clear drainage channels	Before April	Prevent overflow into your ponds

Action	When to Do It	Why
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

THE ROAD DISRUPTION WARNING

Niger has **87 road sections** at risk of flooding in 2026. This is the 6th highest in Nigeria.

What this means:

- Many roads, especially those near the Niger River, will become impassable during the flood season
- The road connecting Niger to Kebbi, Kwara, and Kogi states may be affected
- Rural roads to farming communities will be especially affected
- You may not be able to transport goods to market
- 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 transport crops to market, do it before October
- Identify alternative routes before roads are flooded
- Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road closures

THE DROUGHT SITUATION IN NIGER

Unlike states in the far north, Niger does not face severe drought. But the dry season is drier than normal.

Wet season outlook (April-September 2026):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
North-Central (including Niger)	Slightly Dry to Normal	You will have near-normal rainfall.

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
North-Central (including Niger)	Moderately Dry to Slightly Dry	The dry season will be drier than normal.

What this means for Niger:

- You do not have the extreme "Very Dry" drought of the far north
- But you will still need to manage water carefully during dry season
- The AFO notes a **worsening drought trend** in the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor over the past decade

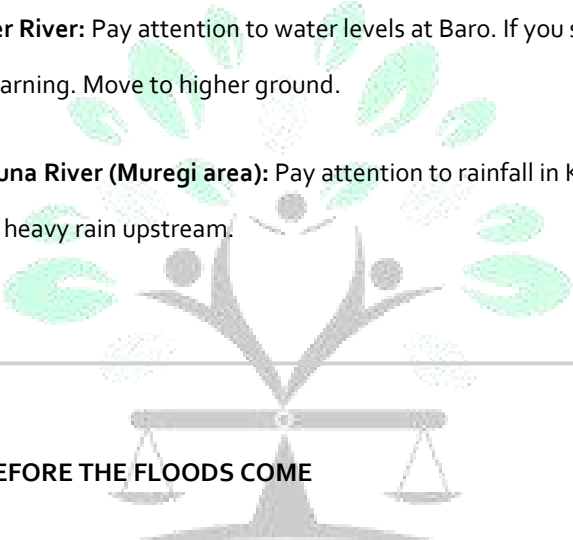
WHAT TO DO IF FLOODING COMES

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 near the Niger River: Pay attention to water levels at Baro. If you see the river rising, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.

If you are near the Kaduna River (Muregi area): Pay attention to rainfall in Kaduna State. The river can rise a few days after heavy rain upstream.



WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE FLOODS COME

Every household in a flood-risk area (especially along the Niger River) 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.

For farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Do not keep bags of grain on the floor. If possible, move stored crops away from the Niger River floodplain.

For livestock owners: Identify high ground where you will move animals during flooding. The October-November flood peak is the biggest danger.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN NIGER

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings. Monitors Baro gauge station.	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG
NSEMA (Niger State Emergency Management Agency)	State-level emergency response	Contact your LGA Agriculture Officer or LGA Chairman for local numbers
NiMet	Weather forecasts	www.nimet.gov.ng

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR NIGER

- **You are one of the Top 10 most flood-vulnerable states in Nigeria.** Take this seriously.
- **The worst months are July, August, and September (JAS).** But October and November also carry significant risk.
- **The Niger River is your main flood danger.** Low-lying communities along the river (especially in Baro, Jebba, Muregi, and Mokwa) are at highest risk.
- **The Kaduna River can also flood** when heavy rain falls in Kaduna State.
- **The Mokwa flood of 29 May 2025 is a warning.** Floods can happen early in the season. Infrastructure failures and environmental factors amplify damage.
- **87 road sections in Niger are at risk of flooding** — the 6th highest in Nigeria. Stock up on supplies before the flood peak.

- **Farmers near the Niger River:** Plant early-maturing varieties. Harvest before October if possible. Store crops in elevated storage.
- **Livestock owners:** Move animals to higher ground before the October-November flood peak.
- **The dry season will be Moderately Dry to Slightly Dry.** The AFO notes a worsening drought trend in the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor.
- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit, know your escape route, and stay alert through November.

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

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.

