



Regional
Remote
Sensing Unit



Regional Flood Watch



Famine Early
Warning System
Network

Month: January

Season: 2005/2006

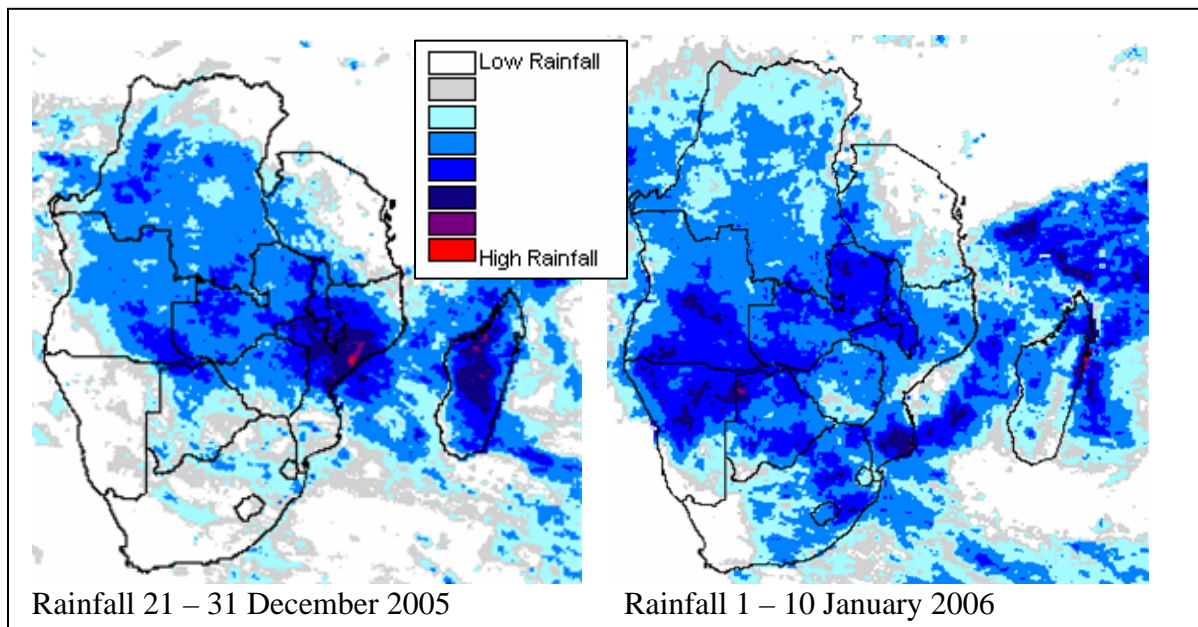
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Southern Africa regional overview

Heavy rains cause flooding in several countries

The heavy rains being experienced in the 2005-2006 rainfall season in southern Africa is having varying impacts for different communities. High rainfall has been the scenario in many parts of the region, and while this has been a welcome reprieve from the recurrent droughts of recent years for many communities, the heavy rains have also resulted in losses due to flooding for others.



Between 21 and 31 December, heavy rains fell over southern Malawi, and northern and central Mozambique (Figure 1a) resulting in serious flooding in some of these areas. Areas in the Caprivi Strip (northern Namibia) northern Botswana, and southern Angola also received heavy rains. In the ensuing period of 1 to 10 January, rainfall was concentrated in southern Mozambique and northern South Africa, as well as in northern Namibia and southern Angola. While areas in Namibia and Angola were already flooded during the 1-10 January period, areas in southern Mozambique and northern South Africa are currently under close surveillance by the national authorities. Additional rains in these areas may cause further flooding. There is also a possibility of localized flooding in areas in the middle to lower Zambezi basin including northern Zimbabwe, eastern Zambia, southern Malawi, and central Mozambique.

South Africa

Flood alert in Mpumalanga

As heavy rains continue in parts of South Africa, authorities have warned residents in Mpumalanga province of possibility for flooding, particularly residents staying in low lying areas. Grootdraai Dam had it's flood and sluice gates

opened on 9 January after the dam rose to full capacity, and downstream areas are at high flood risk.

Namibia

Flooding in Windhoek, damages several houses, dryness expected

Heavy rains in the first week of January caused flooding in the northern half of Namibia. Over 40 houses were flooded in Windhoek in the week of 1-7 January after heavy rains. In one incident on Wednesday 4 January, 14 houses were flooded, while in a separate incident on Friday 6 January, over 30 homes were flooded after the Arebbusch River burst its banks. Reports from the Meteorological department indicate that dryness is expected in the next few days. In the meantime, good rains suitable for agriculture have been occurring in the northern parts of the country. Unfortunately, due to excess heavy rains in some areas, farmers cannot plough as fields are too wet.

Mozambique

Flooding kills people, destroys homes and infrastructure

At least 22 people died in Mozambique as a result of storms that have been occurring there since late December 2005. The deaths occurred due to lightning and flooding in many parts of the country. In Nampula province, heavy rains and strong winds on 25 December left approximately 1500 families homeless. Just over a week later on 2 January, almost 300 homes were destroyed by heavy storms. In Sofala province, about 4000 hectares of maize cropland were destroyed by flooding. Replanting will be required in many of the affected areas. The city of Inhambane in the southern part of the country has been isolated after flooding of the Mutamba River damaged the road to Inhambane. The Limpopo railway line running between Zimbabwe and Maputo has been closed after mudslides damaged the railway line between Mabalane and Combumane districts in Gaza province. Rivers in southern Mozambique, particularly the Incomati and the Limpopo, have risen significantly in the last few days. The INGC is monitoring the river levels in these rivers and in the Massingir dam. Storm activity in the Mozambique channel has affected Mozambique over the last 20 days, being concentrated over central Mozambique in late December 2005 and over southern Mozambique in early January 2006. Despite the damage, the country is not in an emergency situation.

Angola

Houses crumble, croplands lost in Huila and Benguela

After heavy rains in the southern Angola province of Huila, at least 45 houses are reported to have crumbled. No casualties were reported. In the neighboring Benguela province, some 50 hectares of croplands were destroyed by floods.

Malawi

Thousands displaced by flooding in Southern Malawi

Over 2000 people were displaced by flooding in the southern Malawi district of Nsanje, after heavy rains in that area caused the River Ruo to burst its banks. This comes on the backdrop of the district having suffered drought in the previous rainfall season. Millet, maize, and sorghum crops that had been planted close to the river were also destroyed.