

El Niño 2026: What Does This Mean for Korogocho?



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Current Warnings and Forecasts

The Kenyan Meteorological Service Authority (KMSA) is warning of a “very strong” El Niño with an 80–82 percent probability for the months of June through August 2026 and an even higher probability of 90–96 percent that the event will continue through the end of 2026. Specifically, the “short rainy season” (October through December) is expected to be heavier than average and could lead to flooding. The agency has already activated a national response framework to prepare for the impending extreme weather events.

Signs Observed on the Ground

According to the KMSA, the signs of El Niño have become increasingly clear in recent weeks and are already having a noticeable impact on the soil in Kenya. Signs already observed include delayed harvests, as plant growth cycles are disrupted, as well as dwindling water sources, even though some regions are suffering from drought. In addition, agricultural uncertainty is driving up food prices, particularly maize prices.

Expected Weather Patterns

The 2026 weather year presents a mixed picture: While the current August is forecast to be dry and, in some areas, unusually warm for many parts of the country, the weather pattern is expected to change drastically starting in October. Starting in October and November, above-average precipitation is expected for most parts of the country. Experts warn that the current dry spell could be immediately followed by severe flash floods, which would pose a double threat to the population’s livelihoods. Regions such as Tana River and Garissa could be particularly affected by flooding.

Risks for Korogocho: A Serious Assessment

For a densely populated slum like Korogocho in Nairobi, the impacts of a strong El Niño event can be inferred based on historical data and current infrastructure projections.

1. Acute Flood Risk

Korogocho is located in a low-lying, marshy area in the immediate vicinity of the Dandora landfill and lacks adequate drainage infrastructure. During the extreme rainfall forecast for October through December, the narrow alleys quickly turn into raging torrents that carry sewage and trash through the settlement. Experience from the floods in Nairobi in 2024 shows that informal settlements such as Mathare, Mukuru, and Kibera are disproportionately affected, as they are often located in floodplains.

2. Health Risks from Epidemics

Stagnant water after the rains promotes the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea. Since sanitation facilities in Korogocho are already precarious under normal conditions (many latrines, virtually no sewer system), the risk of drinking water contamination increases dramatically. In addition, humidity and heat can lead to an increase in vector-borne diseases such as malaria.

3. Infrastructure Damage and Isolation

The simple dwellings made of corrugated iron and mud are vulnerable to water damage and collapse during prolonged wet conditions. Flooding can also render access routes impassable, making it difficult to deliver food and medical aid. The proximity to the Dandora landfill poses an additional risk, as heavy rains can wash pollutants out of the trash.

4. Socioeconomic Consequences

As observed during previous El Niño events (e.g., 2023/24), flooding in informal settlements often leads to displacements, loss of income, and disruptions to children's education. For the residents of Korogocho, who often work in the informal sector, such a crisis poses a direct threat to their livelihoods.

Conclusion: Reliable sources such as the World Resources Institute (WRI) and studies on Nairobi confirm that, due to its geographic location, dense development, and lack of infrastructure, Korogocho is among the areas most at risk during an El Niño event. Forecasts for late 2026 point to a situation that could reach proportions similar to—or even worse than—the flood disasters of the past.