Over 2.8 million people have now been affected, and more than 280 have reportedly died, due to unusually heavy rainfall and flooding in Eastern Africa. Across the region, homes, infrastructure and livelihoods have been destroyed and damaged in the hardest-hit areas, and the risk of communicable diseases—including cholera—is rising.

In Kenya, the annual short rains—which ordinarily last from October to December—have been exceptionally heavy and affected more than 160,000 people in 31 of the country’s 47 counties. At least 132 people have reportedly died, including 72 who were killed by a landslide which buried their homes in West Pokot County. In Djibouti, the equivalent of two years’ rainfall fell in one day, causing flash floods that have affected up to 250,000 people, including 9 people killed. Flooding in Somalia has affected 547,000 people, including an estimated 370,000 who have been displaced and 17 killed. In South Sudan, where 908,000 people have been affected since June, the flooding has submerged entire communities, destroyed or rendered inaccessible basic services and markets, and caused crop losses which will result in an early start of the lean season in January. In Sudan, more than 420,000 people were affected by floods from August to October, during which 78 people died and 49,500 homes were destroyed. In Ethiopia, about 570,000 people have been affected, including more than 200,000 displaced, and rains have negatively affected the harvest season. In Burundi, 3,100 people were affected by torrential rains in Munyinga province, while in Uganda, flooding and landslides have impacted at least 12 districts, including Bundibugyo District, where more than 4,000 people were affected. In Tanzania, the death toll is over 50, including 10 people who were drowned by a flood-swollen river.

The unusually heavy rainfall, which continued in November in most countries of the region, has primarily been driven by the positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). Although the IOD is expected to diminish in the weeks ahead, heavy rains are likely to persist into December and to intensify in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In many areas, the floods are coming on the back of consecutive droughts, while in others people impacted by the floods are also suffering from conflict and violence. As families struggle to cope with these compounding and complex shocks, there is a high risk of their adopting negative coping mechanisms, including school drop-out and early marriage.