

Almost 4,000 people displaced by tidal surge in Ghana

November 10 2021



Much of Ghana's coastline is low-lying and vulnerable to rising seas.

Almost 4,000 people on Ghana's coast were still displaced on Wednesday after a weekend tidal surge swept through more than 500 houses in the Volta region.

Sea-level rise is a growing worry in West Africa, and in Ghana, many have already been forced to abandon homes and livelihoods.

"We had tidal waves Sunday at dawn," George Ayisi, spokesman for Ghana's National Disaster Management Organisation, told AFP Wednesday.

"In Keta district, we have 1,557 individuals displaced and 239 houses affected. In Anloga district, we have 1,394 displaced and 134 houses affected, and in Ketu South we have 1,027 displaced and 149 houses affected."

Some houses were completely destroyed and at least one school and a cemetery were also affected, he added.

"This is the third tidal wave this year, but it's the heaviest... it's getting worrying, look at the numbers, it affected a lot of people," said Ayisi.

For him, "sea levels are rising so it's definitely linked to climate change."

Ghana has a shoreline stretching some 550 kilometres (340 miles) with a quarter of the country's population living by the sea.

A local official in Keta, Emmanuel Gemegah, told AFP that assistance for those displaced was ongoing.



Ghana.

"The government has provided things like food, clothes, soap and [mosquito nets](#)," he said.

Ghana has tried to mitigate the impact of [sea level](#) rise with the construction of a "sea defence project"—boulders that are piled on top of each other in the sea.

The first phase of the Blekusu Coastal Protection Project, covering 4.3 kilometres of Ghana's southern coast, was completed in 2019.

Ghana's Minister for Works and Housing Francis Asenso Boakyee told reporters on Monday that the government will "soon commence works" on the second phase to cover a minimum of eight kilometres.

"I think it's what can be done now," said Gemegah.

Sunday's tidal waves are "linked to climate change," he said. "We have never experienced this in this magnitude in many years."

Vulnerable people such as children and elderly residents who were affected by the latest wave are for now staying in schools, community centres and churches in safer areas, said Gemegah, but others are already starting to return to the coast.

"This morning I saw fishermen repairing their nets," said Gemegah, "so I think they are preparing to get back into business as [water levels](#) have come down."

Ahead of the recent COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, the United Nations said that more than 100 million extremely poor people in Africa are threatened by accelerating [climate change](#).

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