

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Office of the Minister

Date: March 16th, 2024

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE HEAT WAVES ON HEALTH

Extended periods of high day and night-time temperatures create cumulative physiological stress on the human body which exacerbates the top causes of death globally, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus and renal disease. Heatwaves can acutely impact large populations for short periods of time, often trigger public health emergencies, and result in excess mortality, and cascading socioeconomic impacts. (e.g. lost work capacity and labor productivity). They can also cause loss of health service delivery capacity, where power-shortages which often accompany heatwaves disrupt health facilities.

According to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry advisory, most parts of South Sudan are experiencing a heat wave. It is forecasted that the heat wave will last at least two weeks. High temperatures of 41°C – 45°C are expected this week.

The Ministry of Health, disease surveillance department has put a system in place to detect and respond to cases, as there are already cases of death related to excessive heat being reported in South Sudan.

The awareness of the health risks posed by heatwaves and prolonged exposure to increased temperatures is necessary. Health professionals must adjust their planning and interventions to account for increasing temperatures and heatwaves. Practical, feasible, and often low-cost interventions at the individual, community, organizational, governmental and societal levels, can save lives.

Therefore, we advise the public to follow the guidance in the Ministry of Health advisory issued to the General Public on 15th March 2024. This include: keeping your home cool; keep the body cool and hydrated; helping others; advice related to existing health problems and if you or others feel unwell.

This extreme weather condition poses serious health hazards to children, particularly young learners and adults with underlying health conditions.

It is therefore imperative that measures are taken to mitigate the impact of the severe weather on the health of learners. The Government has decided to take the following measures:



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1. Close down all schools with effect from **Monday, 18 March 2024**.
2. During the closure of the schools, parents are advised to stop their children from playing outdoor, and
3. They should also monitor children, especially the young ones, for signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

The State authorities are hereby directed to implement the measures in this Press Statement. Any school that will be found opened during this time, will have its registration withdrawn.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry will continue to monitor the situation and inform the public accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



Yolanda Awel Deng
Minister,
Ministry of Health
Republic of South Sudan

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin Tako Moyi".

Martin Tako Moyi
Acting Minister,
Ministry of General Education & Instruction
Republic of South Sudan