



INTRA-ACP CLIMATE SERVICES AND RELATED APPLICATIONS PROGRAMME

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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INTRA-ACP CLIMATE SERVICES AND RELATED APPLICATIONS PROGRAMME
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BENEFICIARIES



A. HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rainfall:** The highest May totals occurred over northern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), eastern Madagascar and the southern coast of South Africa. Much of the central and south-western mainland was dry. Central Angola and large parts of South Africa were wetter than normal, while much of the DRC, Tanzania and Madagascar was drier than normal.
- **Drought monitoring:** The 12-month SPEI showed dryness in northern-central DRC, western Angola, the Atlantic coastal belt and southern/eastern Madagascar. The 3-month SPI was wetter across much of southern Africa but remained dry in northern-central DRC and eastern Madagascar.
- **Dry spells:** Runs of 27–30 consecutive dry days affected large areas of Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Northern DRC and southern coastal South Africa had the shortest dry spells.
- **Minimum temperatures:** Nights were warmer than normal over western Angola and the eastern mainland, but cooler across southern Angola, Namibia, Botswana and western and central South Africa.
- **Maximum temperatures:** Days were generally warmer than normal across the central and eastern subregion, especially Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar. Cooler conditions affected parts of the western mainland and south-western South Africa.
- **Extreme rainfall:** Heavy one-day rainfall was localised, with the highest values at the far south-western tip of South Africa and other notable pockets in eastern Tanzania and along eastern Madagascar.
- **Heatwaves:** Daytime heatwaves were most persistent around eastern DRC–western Tanzania and western Madagascar. Night-time heatwaves were concentrated in north-eastern DRC, with pockets extending southwards to Mozambique.

1. REGIONAL RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

During May 2026, rainfall followed the seasonal northward retreat of the main rain belt. The largest monthly accumulations, generally above 80–100 mm, were concentrated over northern DRC. Locally high totals also occurred along the eastern coast of Madagascar, at the far south-western tip and along the southern coastal belt of South Africa, and in small parts of eastern Tanzania. Moderate totals of approximately 20–80 mm extended across southern DRC, northern Angola, parts of eastern Tanzania and Mozambique, eastern South Africa and the coastal margins of Madagascar [Figure 1, left]. By contrast, large parts of the central, western and south-western mainland recorded less than 10 mm, with extensive areas receiving little or no rainfall. These dry conditions covered much of Angola away from the north, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as the interior of Mozambique and northern and central South Africa. Low monthly totals were also evident across western Madagascar [Figure 1, left].

The May 2026 rainfall anomaly showed marked regional contrasts. Below-normal rainfall affected much of Tanzania, parts of the DRC and Mozambique, and eastern Madagascar. In contrast, above-normal to markedly above-normal rainfall occurred across central Angola, parts of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and large areas of South Africa. Near-normal conditions prevailed elsewhere. In normally dry areas, above-normal conditions may still represent relatively small rainfall totals. [Figure 1, right].

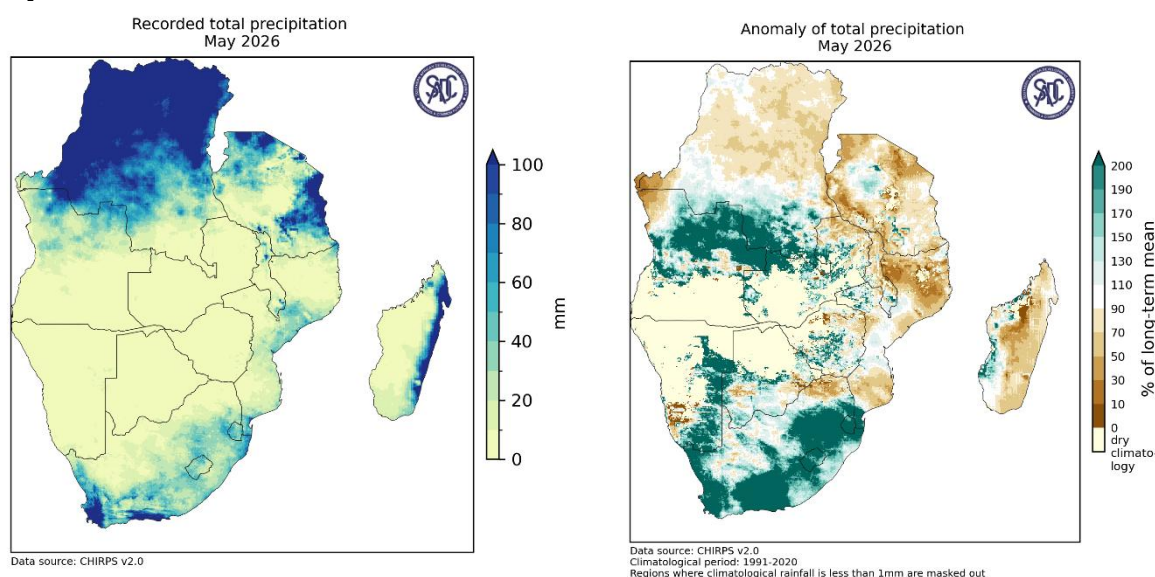


Figure 1: Observed rainfall (left) and rainfall anomaly (right) for the month of May 2026.

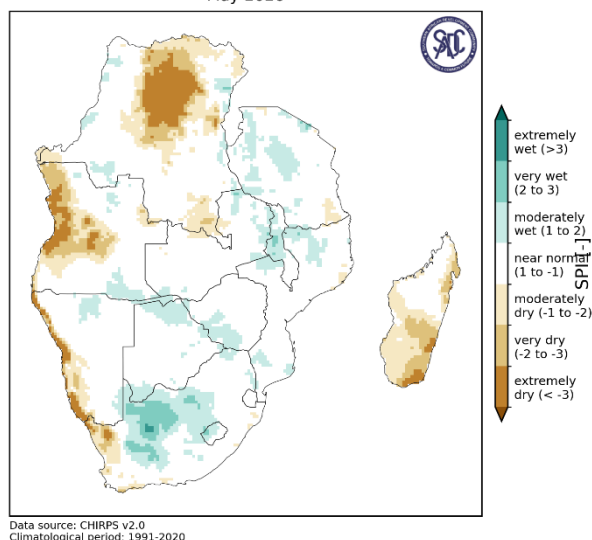
1.1 Drought Monitoring

1.1.1 Seasonal and Annual Drought Assessment

The 12-month Standardized Precipitation–Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI-12) for May 2026 indicated predominantly near-normal long-term moisture conditions across the region. Moderate to extreme dryness was evident over northern and central DRC, western Angola, the Atlantic coastal belt of Namibia and western South Africa, and southern and eastern Madagascar. Wetter-than-normal conditions were concentrated over parts of central South Africa and Lesotho, with smaller pockets in the central and eastern mainland [Figure 2, left].

The 3-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-3) showed wetter conditions across much of southern Africa. Moderate to very wet conditions covered South Africa and extended into Lesotho, Eswatini, southern Mozambique, Zimbabwe and parts of Botswana and Zambia. Wet pockets also occurred in Angola, DRC, Tanzania and Malawi. Moderate to extreme dryness affected northern-central DRC and eastern Madagascar; conditions elsewhere were near normal [Figure 2, right].

ded 12-month Standardized Precipitation-Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI)
May 2026



Recorded 3-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)
May 2026

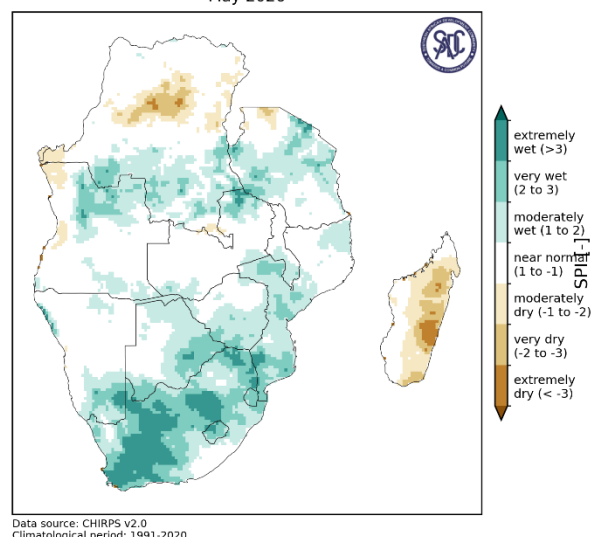


Figure 2: Drought assessment using the 12-month SPEI (left) and 3-month SPI (right) for May 2026.

1.1.2 Short term drought (dry spells)

The maximum consecutive dry-day analysis shows that prolonged dry spells were widespread during May 2026. Runs of 27–30 dry days affected much of southern and eastern Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as western and central Mozambique and parts of Tanzania. Many other areas in the central and eastern mainland, together with western and central Madagascar, recorded 21–27 consecutive dry days. Shorter sequences of approximately 0–12 days occurred mainly across northern DRC and the southern and south-eastern coastal belt of South Africa, with transitional values of about 12–21 days in adjoining areas. The long dry sequences over the south-western mainland are consistent with the regional dry season [Figure 3].

Recorded maximum consecutive dry days
May 2026

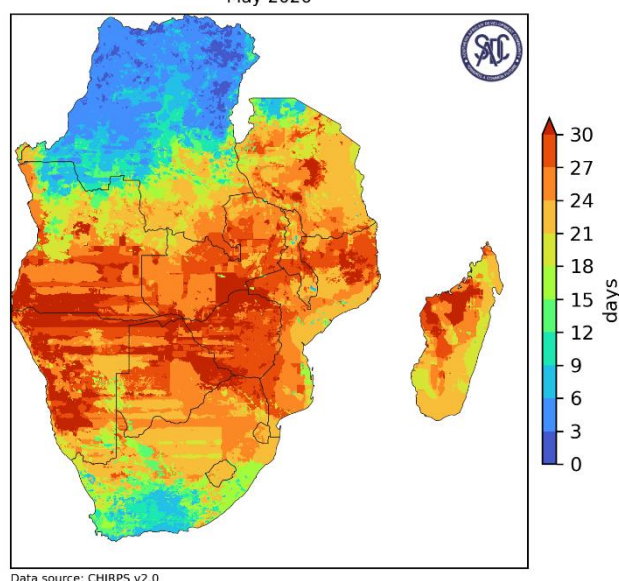


Figure 3: Dry spells prevalence during the month of May 2026.

1.2 Extreme Rainfall

Extreme one-day rainfall was limited and spatially localised during May 2026. Most of the interior recorded daily maxima below 25 mm, and broad parts of the central and south-western mainland recorded little or no rainfall. Daily maxima of approximately 25–50 mm occurred in scattered parts of northern DRC, eastern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, eastern and southern South Africa, and along Madagascar's eastern coast. Higher pockets of about 70–100 mm were observed locally in eastern Tanzania, eastern Madagascar and the south-eastern coastal zone of South Africa. The largest mapped values, exceeding 100 mm in a small area, occurred near the far south-western tip of South Africa [Figure 4].

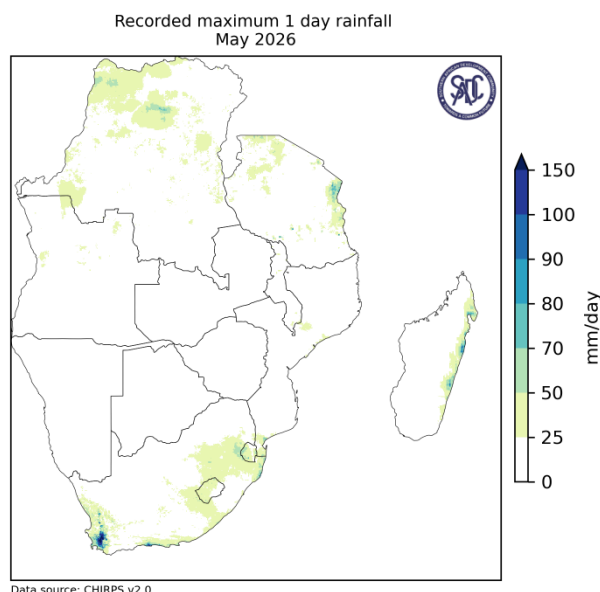


Figure 4: Maximum rainfall recorded over a one-day period during the month of May 2026.

2. REGIONAL TEMPERATURE

2.1 Minimum Temperature

Mean minimum temperatures in May 2026 displayed a strong north-south gradient. Values above 20–23 °C occurred across northern DRC, northern and western Angola and some low-lying eastern coastal areas, covering Tanzania and most of Mozambique. Much of the central mainland recorded approximately 11–20 °C. Cooler nights of about 5–11 °C affected large parts of Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, including Lesotho, while the central highlands of Madagascar were also cooler than its coastal zones [Figure 5, left].

Minimum temperatures were 1–3 °C above the 1991–2020 average over northern DRC, western Angola and much of the eastern mainland from eastern Zimbabwe and Malawi into Mozambique; positive anomalies also affected eastern South Africa and parts of Madagascar. The strongest warm anomalies, locally around +3 to +4 °C, occurred near the Zimbabwe-Malawi-Mozambique sector. In contrast, anomalies of about -1 to -4 °C extended across southern Angola, Namibia, Botswana and much of western and central South Africa. Parts of southern DRC, Zambia and Tanzania were near normal or slightly cooler than normal [Figure 5, right].

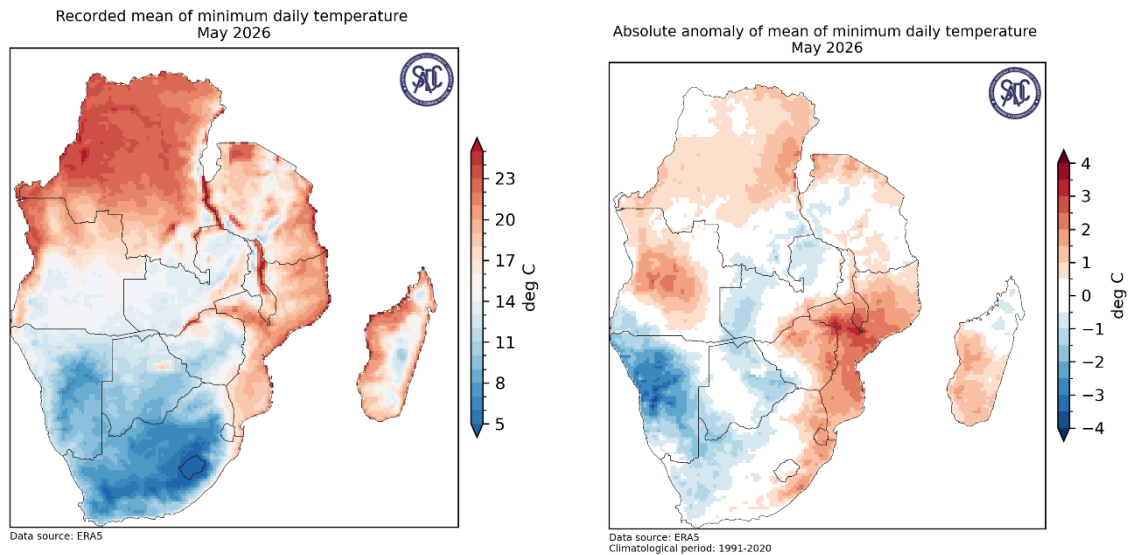


Figure 5: Observed average minimum temperature (left) and anomalies (right) for May 2026.

2.2 Maximum Temperature

Mean maximum temperatures exceeded 30 °C over much of northern DRC and northern Angola, with similarly high values in some low-lying parts of eastern Africa and along sections of Madagascar's coast. Temperatures of about 24–30 °C covered most of Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana. The coolest daytime conditions, generally 15–24 °C, occurred over southern and high-altitude areas, notably South Africa, Lesotho and the central highlands of Madagascar [Figure 6, left].

Minimum temperature anomalies in May 2026 were generally 1–3 °C above normal across northern DRC, western Angola, eastern Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, eastern South Africa and parts of Madagascar. The strongest warm anomalies, reaching 3–4 °C above normal, occurred around the Zimbabwe–Malawi–Mozambique sector. Conversely, temperatures were approximately 1–4 °C below normal across southern Angola, Namibia, Botswana, western and central South Africa, and parts of Zambia and Tanzania. Near-normal conditions prevailed elsewhere [Figure 6, right].

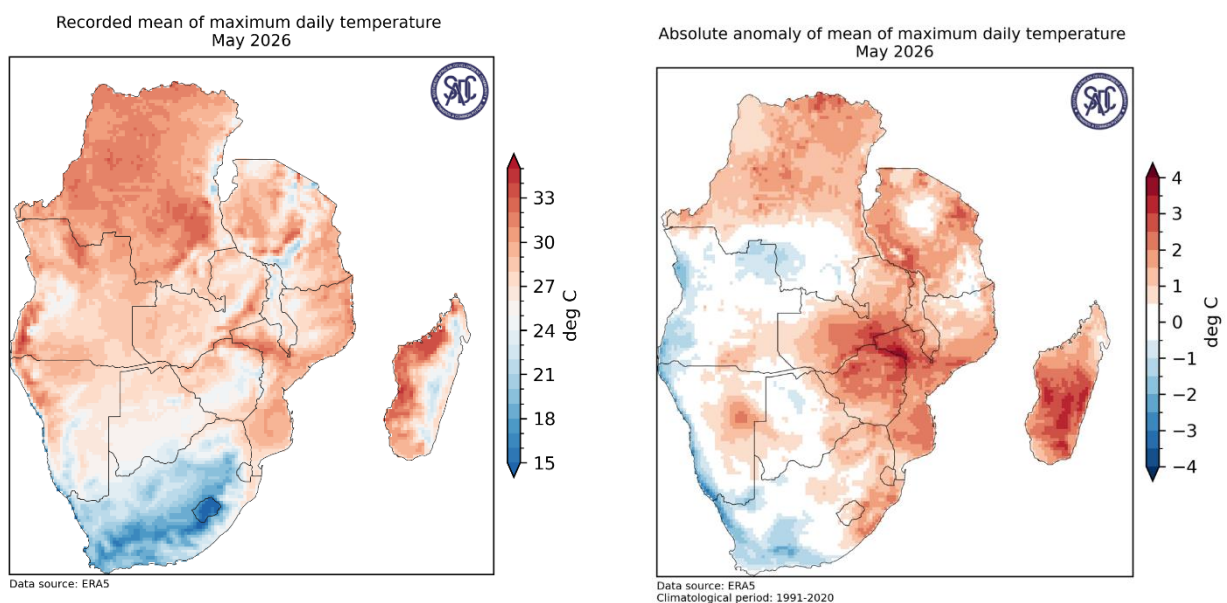


Figure 6: Observed maximum average temperature (left) and anomalies (right) for May 2026.

2.3 Heatwaves

Daytime heatwaves are defined as at least three consecutive days above the 95th percentile of daily maximum temperature; night-time heatwaves are at least three consecutive nights above the 90th percentile of daily minimum temperature.

Daytime heatwaves were absent or short-lived across much of Angola, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Events lasting about 9–21 days affected parts of the DRC, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. Frequencies above 21 days were concentrated around eastern DRC–western Tanzania and western Madagascar [Figure 7, left].

Night-time heatwaves were limited over most western and southern areas. More than 23 heatwave days occurred locally in north-eastern DRC, while a corridor of about 7–19 days extended through eastern DRC and parts of Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Most of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa recorded fewer than three qualifying days [Figure 7, right].

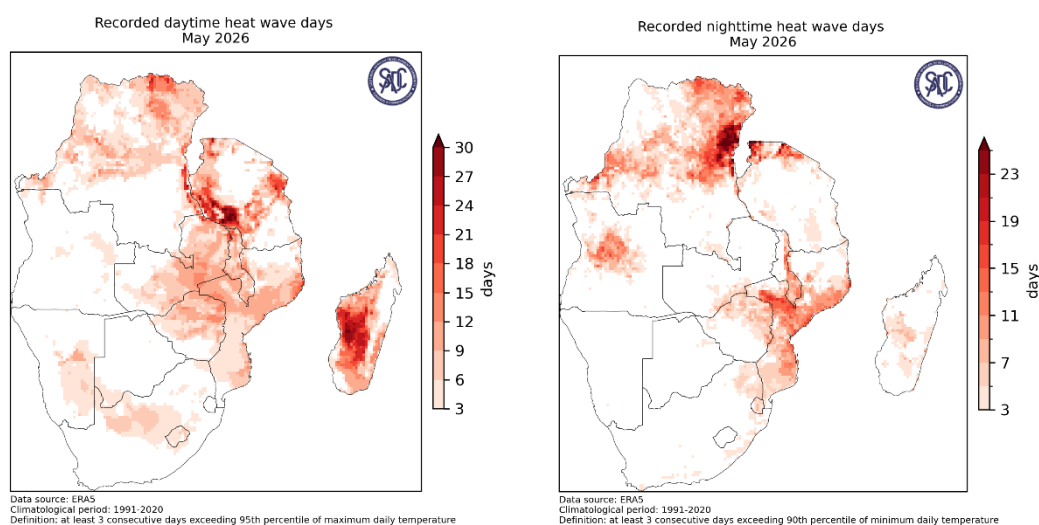


Figure 7: Heatwaves detected during the month of May 2026

NOTE:

This bulletin uses CHIRPS and ERA5 data. While these datasets are considered broadly representative of local conditions over the SADC region, the results presented here may differ from those derived using local observations from Member States.

Users are therefore, urged to consult the local National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) for local conditions and detailed interpretation of the contents of this bulletin.



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