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Headline: London underprepared for deadly climate change risks, report warns

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In this file photo taken on February 15, 2019 young demonstrators hold placards as they attend a climate change protest organised by "Youth Strike 4 Climate", on Whitehall in central London. AFP

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LONDON — London is underprepared for the heatwaves, flooding and rising sea levels it is forecast to experience in coming years, a report commissioned by Mayor Sadiq Khan said on Wednesday.

The report, which was ordered after soaring temperatures, wildfires and floods all hit the capital in recent years, said a "step change" in planning and investment was needed.

"London has many good plans and programs to prepare for climate hazards but we need to recognize that Londoners now face lethal risks," the chair of the report, and former chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd said in statement.

Boyd said that while there had been a strong focus on reducing emissions, Britain also needed to prepare and adapt its critical national infrastructure.

"Things that we need to deal with in the future have suddenly become very, very real," Boyd told Reuters.

In summer 2022, Britain recorded its hottest day ever during a heatwave that fueled fires across London's outer areas, shut down key transport services, and led to the country declaring a national emergency.

The report said climate change presented a threat to life among the most vulnerable communities in London, such as the elderly, children, low income families, marginalized communities and vulnerable health groups.

The report's recommendations included strengthening flood defenses along the River Thames and improving housing standards.

Khan said he would later this year follow the report's advice to undertake a multi-agency exercise to test the capital's preparedness for severe heat.

"A city is only as good as its weakest link," Boyd said.

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