

## Flash floods lock in villagers

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Children from Muana Village play near the flooded Toga Bridge in Rewa. Pictures: ELIKI+ NUKUTABU

VILLAGERS of Waivou in Rewa were forced to stay indoors yesterday as they braced for rising water which flooded their homes.

And they have called on the government to improve drainage systems in the area, which they believe was the reason for the flooding in every heavy downpour.

They said they could no longer bear the pain of seeing their homes and plantations flooded almost every month, a trend they feared which could leave them penniless.

This year alone, the villagers experienced three major floodings which caused a considerable amount of damage in homes and farms.

Village headman Joseva Navusolo said while the heavy downfall was an act of nature, he wanted something done to avoid flooding.

"The trend is worrying because for the past two months alone we had two floods which destroyed our root crops and even our homes," said Mr Navusolo.

Then at around 11pm on Monday, villagers had to move their belongings to double-storey buildings within the area as the Rewa River broke its bank.

Last night, villagers were keeping their fingers crossed that the heavy downpour which caused severe flooding in other parts of the region would not come their way. Mr Navusolo said while they appreciated that the road had finally come to their doorstep, the government had failed in its duty to maintain the drainage.

"The water often becomes stagnant and it will take a while to recede because we don't have enough drains. Even the single floodgate does not really help," said Mr Navusolo.

He said he had raised the issue a number of times with government officials but little was done to arrest the situation.

Mr Navusolo said apart from the improvement of drainage the government should also consider providing assistance for farmers whose plantations were damaged by floodwaters.