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Alexander BesantSeptember 12, 2013 09:09

Kenya finds massive aquifers in arid Turkana region

The aquifers may be large enough to supply the country with water for the next 70 years, the government claimed.



A woman from the remote Turkana tribe in Northern Kenya on November 9, 2009 near Lodwar, Kenya. In 2009, over 23 million people across East Africa were facing critical shortages of water and food due to climate change. (Christopher Furlong/AFP/Getty Images)
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Two large aquifers have been discovered in Kenya's bone-dry Turkana region.

The aquifers — detected via satellite — may be large enough to supply the country with water for the next 70 years, the government claimed.

The discovery brings new hope to a country in which 17 million people lack access to safe drinking water and 28 million people do not have access to proper sanitation.

Turkana is a rural region, home to nomadic herders who live and work in a harsh, dry climate that is starved for rain. Climate change is said to have caused serious droughts in the area, causing food shortages and unrest due to scarce resources.

"The news about these water reserves comes at a time when reliable water supplies are highly needed," Judi Wakhungu, Cabinet secretary for Kenya's Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, said in a statement.

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"We must now work to further explore these resources responsibly and safeguard them for future generations."

Three other aquifers have been detected but must be confirmed through drilling.

The proven aquifers hold about 250 billion cubic meters of water (66 trillion gallons).

Wakhungu said Kenya uses about three billion cubic meters a year.

The aquifers were found by France-based Radar Technologies International, a natural resources exploration firm that also discovered an aquifer in Namibia.

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