

KZN Cabinet requests national support on disasters

The KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet has approached National Government in a bid to declare parts of the province worst hit by the recent flash floods and thunderstorms disaster areas. This after ferocious storms wreaked havoc in the province leaving a trail of destruction on infrastructure, property and leaving thousands of people homeless.

Cabinet received a report on the disaster incidents that befell the province recently from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

Premier Zweli Mkhize on Wednesday said after considering the magnitude of the preliminary damage and the resources that will be required to fix the damage, Cabinet decided to request national classification of affected areas to that of disaster status and advised municipalities to adopt resolutions in the same vain.

This means the province is formally approaching national government for additional resources to rebuild damaged infrastructure and return peoples life to normalcy.

"On behalf of cabinet we extend our heartfelt condolences to all the families that lost their loved ones through these unfortunate incidents.

"While we know that no one can be blamed for this tragedy orchestrated by forces of nature, we sympathise with all our people who are going through difficulties at this important period preceding Christmas. It is because of our appreciation of the traumatic experience our people are going through which has influenced us to make this declaration.

"This is indeed a huge setback for us as it means resources must be spent on rebuilding destroyed infrastructure and property. Funds for new infrastructure may have to be diverted to fix the damage," Mkhize said.

To date, a total of 14 lives have been lost. The worst affected areas are Ladysmith Ugu, District and other parts of Durban.

The damage will escalate to millions of rands. "We do not at this stage have the accurate figure but once all the emergency relief and rescue efforts have been conducted we will commence with the process of quantifying the damage.

"We are heartened by the bravery of disaster and emergency personnel who continue to risk their lives to save property and their fellow human beings," Mkhize said.

Meanwhile, in the North West, Premier Thandi Modise had conveyed her condolences to families of the three people who lost their lives. Over 50 houses were damaged in torrential rains and heavy storms that hit several villages across the province on Tuesday.

According to police, the first death reported was of a 22-year-old man caught in heavy rain while walking home in Madibogo South. His aunt said he coughed the entire night and was unable to walk or talk before dying.

In a second incident, a 52-year-old man was found dead in a field used for grazing animals. Police suspect that he could have been struck by lightning whilst looking for his cattle when caught up in the heavy rains on his way back.

A third person, an 80-year-old woman was found dead on Tuesday afternoon, beneath a tree between Rantse and Marotse villages outside Mahikeng.

According to the police, Mosebi Lenah Motsemme was walking home after visiting her daughter in another village. She reportedly lost direction due to heavy rain and decided to seek shelter under a tree.

When she did not return home, her son went looking for her and found her beneath the tree, dead.

Houses and business premises were damaged when heavy storms hit Motsitlane, Dikgatlhong and Lenganeng sections of Madibogo village, Piet Plessis, Dryharts and Boitumelo Township outside Bloemhof this week.

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