



**HIGH ALERT:** More than 10 families have been left destitute by the ongoing floods.

# Families flee flooding

Rainfall so heavy five bridges collapsed and some areas can only be reached by boat

SIBONGISENI MAPHUMULO

HEAVY rainfall is expected to continue until this afternoon in some parts of northern KwaZulu-Natal which have been battered by heavy storms.

The South African Weather Service says rainfall has been forecast for parts of eDumbe, Abaqulusi and the uPhongolo local municipalities which have been hit by severe thunderstorms accompanied by heavy rain.

The Umkhanyakude district municipality which is among the hardest hit said it remains on high alert as rains continue to batter the drought stricken area. Municipal spokesperson Mduduzi Dlamini said more than 10 families had been left destitute by the ongoing floods

which started on Friday.

“At the moment we don’t know how many people have been affected as we have not been able to reach everyone in the rural areas,” he said.

In the hardest hit area of Jozini, five bridges were reported to have collapsed, leaving families marooned.

“We have asked the SAPS for assistance in using their boats because some areas can only be reached that way now that the bridges have collapsed,” Dlamini said.

By yesterday morning no fatalities had been reported. Dlamini said three children had to be rescued when they attempted to cross a river.

Disaster Management has been helping in the affected areas and the depart-

ment of social development has also stepped in to counsel residents. Dlamini said a multidisciplinary approach was needed to deal with the disaster.

He said the department of public works and the provincial department of cooperative governance and traditional affairs had also been called in to assist.

“One thing this has shown us is that we need a disaster management summit for the area so that we can come up with a strategy for quicker response,” Dlamini said.

The Zululand district also did not escape unscathed. Rainfall measuring up to 100mm battered the areas from Empangeni and Eshowe.

Homes and roads in the Gingindlovu area were flooded. The R34, John

Ross Parkway, and the R102 between Gingindlovu and Mtunzini had to be temporarily closed due to flooding.

The rains did help to increase dam levels in the area with the Hluhluwe Dam having risen to 100% from 45% at the weekend.

The cross boundary water source also supplies the areas of Umtubatuba and neighbouring Hlabisa.

“We are very happy about this latest development. This is good news for the people, it was a struggle to even get boreholes to rise so this is big and definitely good news,” Dlamini said.

This as northern KwaZulu-Natal remains one of the most drought-stricken areas in the province.

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