

# KZN assessing damage

## Provincial departments compiling reports on extent of damage by storms

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THE KZN government is still trying to assess the full scale of the damage caused by the storms which hit the province last month, including how many people died and how many houses and facilities were damaged or destroyed.

KZN Co-operative Governance (Cogta) spokesperson Lennox Mabaso said the damage assessment formed part of the second phase of their disaster relief plan.

The rebuilding operation for New Hanover and Mpolweni, which was hit by a tornado, is in the region of R35,8 million. Cogta's Senzelwe Mzila said 173 houses were partially damaged and 292 houses were totally damaged.

"Various departments are working together to provide interim relief to the affected families. The Department of Human Settlements is assisting with building material to help the families rebuild their lives," he said.

Those affected are being provided with food vouchers, trauma counselling, emergency housing repairs and tents.

Acting KZN premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube has directed that all departments work together to provide an adequate response.

The Department of Public Works will be involved with the facilities that were destroyed while the Department of Human Settlements will focus on issues relating to housing.

"We have teams that we have deployed to the affected areas to assess damages so that these can be quantified and a comprehensive report will be presented by KZN Cogta to the provincial executive chaired by the premier. There is a sense of urgency in compiling this report because we would not wish to prolong the suffering in affected communities as a caring government," she said.

In addition to relief efforts from provincial government and municipalities, various NGOs and religious organisations have contributed aid. Still on site are Meals on Wheels, Al-Imdaad Foundation, Red Cross and the Gift of the Givers that are providing hot meals, blankets, mattresses and food parcels.

The relief efforts have been shared among the provincial government and municipalities and various NGOs and churches. Social Development has been providing psycho-social counselling on the ground. Health has been attending

to medical emergencies. Sassa has been providing food parcels. Home Affairs has been issuing ID documents to those who lost them in disaster-related incidents. Human Settlements, together with municipalities, is conducting assessments of damages.

"Collectively, we are mounting a response offensive to ensure that all affected communities are attended to and our teams and partners are hard at work on the ground in this regard.

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"As the province of KZN, we are at the forefront of climate change which is redefining conventional science and traditional responses to disasters. We will continue to bolster our education and public awareness efforts as we near the summer season which is, historically, the most active season in terms of storms, lightning, and most recently tornadoes," said Mzila.

KZN premier spokesperson Ndabenzihle Sibiyi said disaster teams would remain on the ground and were working

hard to provide support to the affected communities.

"Relief efforts are being marshalled through the Joint Operations Centre that has been set up and to date food, blankets, mattresses and other urgent necessities have been provided. Most public facilities, such as churches and community halls, are being used to house those displaced by the violent storms," said Sibiyi.

He said the Department of Home Affairs will be assisting with the issuing of temporary IDs and certificates and all relevant documents to all affected family members who will undergo a thorough authentication process. Sassa and the Department of Education are also supporting the victims, including by ensuring that children get uniforms to go to school and that those busy with exams were adequately supported.

The number of fatalities in KZN has risen to 19 since October 25 when recording began. These fatalities include:

- four casualties of lightning strikes at Jozini;
- one casualty of a lightning strike at uMzimkhulu;

- four casualties of lightning strikes at uThukela;
- one casualty of a lightning strike at Ndwedwe;
- one casualty of a lightning strike at Maphumulo;
- one casualty of drowning at KwaDukuza;
- one casualty of drowning at Ulundi;
- two casualties of a collapsed wall due to heavy rain in eThekweni;
- two casualties of a tornado at uMshwathi;
- one casualty of a lightning strike at Msunduzi; and
- one casualty of a lightning strike at Ugu.

There are reports of three unaccounted persons across KZN and missing persons reports are still being verified.

Bheki Mbeje, who survived the New Hanover tornado after being caught in the middle of it, and whose house was damaged, said he was living with his neighbours while he waited for his house to be rebuilt.

Mbeje, who fainted, and sustained injuries to his back, said he was recovering and expected to be well in a week's time. "My house is gone, there is no roof or wall. All the food and furniture was destroyed. We have nothing ..."