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Premier says progress is being made to rehome disaster hit

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KWAZULU-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube said progress has been made to house disaster victims especially those still housed in community-care centres since the April floods.

Dube-Ncube was speaking yesterday from the Truro Hall in Westville, Durban, where there were cries of delight as flood victims were all packed up as they waited to go to their new accommodation.

The 47 families who had been staying at the care centre since the disaster in April moved to an accommodation building in Reservoir Hills.

In her update on the progress in the five months since the floods, Dube-Ncube said the province was no longer building temporary residential units (TRUs) but was opting for temporary emergency accommodation (TEAs) instead.

"The option of TEA where we do not build 'indelas', but house people temporarily as we are building their permanent accommodation, is a dramatic change in approach and testifies to the government commitment to improve the lives of our communities in distress."

The premier said the building identified to accommodate these victims had 50 rooms.

"As we relocate these families, earthworks and construction is under way a few kilometres down the road from here (Truro Hall), where the Department of Human Settlement and Public Works is building 80 new state-of-the-art three-storey buildings that will become permanent homes for our citizens whose lives and livelihoods were devastated by the floods," she said.

The temporary accommodation is a block of flats which used to be a student housing complex and has 50 lockable rooms with two or three beds in each unit (112 beds in total), CCTV cameras, hot water, it is fenced, has a security gate and biometrics, kitchen with four four-plate stoves, lounge, kids homework area, ensuite and common bathroom and a guard house.

The premier added that the Department of Social Development would issue vouchers to the families during the course of the week to assist in procuring food items.

Flood victim Khanyisile Maseko, 24, said she was happy the day to move out of the hall had finally come even though it had taken longer than anticipated.

"I am glad that we are being moved back to Reservoir Hills, it was difficult living at the hall as it was far from work and the children's schools."

Another flood victim Nosipho Mtshali, 35, who was running a crèche from her home before the floods said

as a person living with a disability the



KWAZULU-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube. | SUPPLIED

move meant she would be able to use her crutches freely.

"I am pleased that I will be able to use my crutches to move around, I had been nicknamed Spider-Man at the shelter as I used the halls to help me get around," she chuckled.

Dube-Ncube said there was a practical plan to move people out of community-care centres by the end of the next month and said they had reduced care centres from 135 to 80.

She said a R325 764 000 grant from the national Department of Human Settlements had enabled the delivery of TRUs which to date stood at 1 315 units provincially.

"Out of the 1 315 TRUs complete to date, 1 202 have been occupied leaving a difference (of) 113 that is not occupied.

"We are delighted to report that all the remaining 80 shelters have now been linked to land parcels, but these land parcels are at different stages of readiness," she said.

Dube-Ncube also expressed her gratitude for the approval of Rental Assistance Scheme and Temporary Residential Accommodations which will make them achieve the eradication of mass-care centres.

"We have 19 buildings that we are looking at for Temporary Emergency Accommodation. These include former student accommodation, former hotels and state-owned properties. These facilities are currently not being used," she said.

Meanwhile, progress had been made in other areas including the restoration of water supply, rebuilding of sewer networks and pump stations.

"We are making progress in rebuilding the water schemes that were washed away. We are on course to get the construction work and to ensure the full restoration of water supply to the greater Othongathi by November."

Regarding the identification of bodies, the premier reported that five bodies had been positively linked with families using DNA testing.

"To date at least 27 cases are still unknown. Of this, 12 profiles were generated but not identified.

"So far, five cases have been positively linked with families, while two cases have returned a negative result, and will have to be re-conducted."