



Publication: Witness, The - Main
Title: MOP UP AFTER HEAVY RAINFALL
Publish date: 24 Oct 2023
Page: 3

Reach: 6180
AVE: R 16064.24
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MOP-UP AFTER HEAVY RAINFALL

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Mop-up and disaster assessment operations began yesterday in KwaZulu-Natal after more than 100 homes were destroyed due to torrential downpours over the weekend.

At least four people died due to a thunderstorm accompanied by strong winds in Mtubatuba in northern KZN.

The storm tore roofs off houses and caused damage to infrastructure, including power cables, roads, bridges, and vehicles.

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube led the disaster assessment in Mtubatuba alongside the MECs for Human Settlements and Public Works and Co-operative Governance (Cogta).

Dube-Ncube said the government will be assisting with the burial of the people who died in Mtubatuba.

She added that in addition to the infrastructural damage the community of Mtubatuba was grieving as it had lost six people, most of them being children.

"It definitely will be hard to ensure that all damage is fixed, especially with the financial constraints that government is going through; however, we will be calling on national government to assist with fixing the damage. We cannot say to the national government how much we will need at this point as we are still doing assessments."

More than 70 houses were destroyed in the Somkhele and KwaMyeki areas, leaving hundreds homeless.

"In the interim, some victims have been sheltered in community halls, while some churches have also availed accommodation to the affected families," said Human Settlements spokesperson, Mlungisi Khumalo.

In eThekweni, mayor Mxolisi Kaunda visited households in Molweni in the Durban outer west to assess the damage and to facilitate necessary interventions following heavy rains over the weekend.

There are no fatalities or missing persons recorded. However, according to the preliminary assessment done by disaster management officials, about 239 people were affected by the heavy rainfall with a total of 29 houses destroyed.

One injury was reported in Inchanga due to lightning.

"Areas that were mostly affected include Ekukhanyeni, Newtown A, uMlazi, Inchanga, Molweni, and Briardene. Verification of damaged houses is under way and social partners have been activated for immediate humanitarian assistance.

"City officials are working tirelessly to bring the situation to normalcy. Cleaning operations on affected roads are also under way," said eThekweni head of communication Lindiwe Khuzwayo.

Cogta has confirmed that the death toll has risen to six.

Another person was found to have been struck by lightning in Mpofana Municipality.