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Author: Vukani Langa

INFRASTRUCTURE

Call to fix rain damage before exams start

VUKANI LANGA
vukani.langa@ini.co.za

KZN PREMIER Nomusa Dube-Ncube has called on the provincial government to accelerate the repair of critical infrastructure damaged by heavy thunderstorms and rainfall with strong winds throughout the province over the weekend, before matric exams resume.

Dube-Ncube issued the call during a recent oversight visit joined by Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs MEC Bongwiwe Sithole-Moloi, Human Settlements and Public Works MEC Siphon Nkosi, and the mayor of uMkhanyakude District Municipality, Siphile Mdaka, in Mtubatuba.

"All responsible structures must ensure classrooms are urgently cleared of debris where possible and temporary classroom structures installed where there was total damage, to ensure the commencement of matric exams is not disrupted," said Dube-Ncube.

"Many schools and homes have been damaged and electricity infrastructure destroyed, leaving people homeless and in the dark. As the province, our budget alone will not suffice to cover the cost of this devastation."

Dube-Ncube also sent her condolences to the affected families.

"I am deeply saddened by the devastating impact of the recent storm on these communities. We are actively devising plans to assist all those affected. We are engaging the national government, requesting support as we face this disaster," she said.

The death toll has risen to eight

people, with the discovery of another individual struck by lightning in the Mpopana Local Municipality under the uMgungundlovu District.

In Mtubatuba, five people, including a one-year-old, lost their lives following a structural collapse under heavy rains and strong winds.

Mtubatuba Local Municipality mayor Mxolisi Mthethwa said: "We are yet to conclude the full reports on the damage caused. This is a saddening and shocking incident to witness.

"In ward 16, the Zungu family in the eMachibini area lost their two toddlers. Other family members survived because of the neighbour's assistance. If they didn't help it would have been worse."

One of the victims, Ntombizonke Mkhwanazi, who has a family of 10 members, said they lost everything, including food and three houses.

"All 10 of us are sleeping in one room that survived the storm. We are seeking food from the neighbours. We don't know what to do, we are still traumatised," said Mkhwanazi.

So far over 600 households across the province have been reported damaged. During the premier's visit, over 134 houses were reported destroyed in Somkhele and KwaMyeki in Mtubatuba Local Municipality areas.

In the uMgungundlovu District, 23 households in the Rosetta informal settlement under Mpopana Local Municipality were affected.

The premier assured victims the government would assist with burial expenses.

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