

Cogta relief teams preparing for Cyclone Freddy

Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Thembi Nkandimeng, says the department is preparing for any eventuality ahead of the announcement that Cyclone Freddy is expected to bring heavy rains and strong winds in the north eastern part of South Africa from early Saturday morning.



Image: SANews.gov.za

Speaking to *SANews*, the Minister called on communities, who may be affected by Cyclone Freddy, to heed warnings and evacuate if necessary.

“Listen more to the notices of evacuations, stay safe and don’t try to cross any streams. One of the cases in Nkomazi [Local Municipality] was a learner who was trying to cross a stream out of school and he’s still missing as of [Tuesday].

“We have had six fatalities in that area alone, and 11 in the entirety of Mpumalanga [as a result of the current flooding]. One life is one too many, so we need to stay clear of streams. Our teams are on the ground, humanitarian relief as well, readying ourselves for Friday and Saturday in any eventuality that we may need to evacuate more people,” Nkandimeng said.

She said Cyclone Freddy is expected to bring added pressure on infrastructure and homes that are already flood battered and will set back ongoing relief efforts.



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“It is anticipated that it will continue pouring in Mpumalanga. We are already sitting at about 1,929 houses that must be [provided] for human settlement relief, only in Mpumalanga.

“So you can see that if we are going to combine a budget for human settlement relief and development for all the seven [affected] provinces, we are going to be ranging into serious billions of rands in terms of what we need to repair,” she said.

Turning to current relief efforts, Nkandimeng told *SANews* Cogta has written to President Cyril Ramaphosa requesting the

assistance of the South African army to assist in disaster relief in the flood-hit Eastern Cape.

Heavy rains have battered several provinces over the past two weeks, leading President Ramaphosa to declare a National State of Disaster to ensure an accelerated response from government to assist affected communities.

"I visited Nkomazi, which is the hardest hit in Mpumalanga. We are assessing about six municipalities there. We are estimating damages going to almost R1bn. The Eastern Cape has already rounded up and estimated billions as well.

"We are discussing and asking for authority from the President and the Minister of Defence to dispense the army in the Eastern Cape because some of the roads are actually totally destroyed," Nkadameng said.

She reflected on the immense damage that ongoing flooding has caused in communities all over the country.

"Water infrastructure has been damaged and villages have not been receiving water. Roads have been damaged. Farmers have lost livestock. Just in Nkomazi alone, 5,650 cattle and goats have been lost, 119 farming equipment has been lost... and on estimation, that will cost around R200m for the farmers to repair.

"So it's quite [a lot] of damage that has happened and will cost us a great deal to repair," she said.

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