

FLOODING RUINED LIVES

By Sinalo Peyi

The community of Bathurst Location, in the Eastern Cape under Ndlambe Municipality, are trying to rebuild their damaged homes after a flood that began on September 22, 2023. Many households were affected to the extent that houses were swept away by the rain and furniture was damaged. Some residents say that they lost food in the floods, and many are experiencing homelessness which is forcing them to ask neighbours for a place to sleep. The flood did not only affect Bathurst Location but also the surrounding areas and towns in the Eastern Cape.

In Port Alfred, houses built in informal settlements were destroyed by the floods. People lost food, clothes, and their furniture and appliances. Children lost their schoolbooks and uniforms, which could prevent them from going to school because most parents are unable to afford to replace the missing items.

In Bathurst, an area called Enkanini was also affected by the heavy rain that lasted more than five days, ruining houses that were built in low-lying areas. Electrical appliances such as televisions were destroyed, and the continuation of electrical flow made the area even more hazardous. Many community members who cannot continue to stay in their homes have asked for places to stay with their neighbours, but there are others who have nowhere to sleep. These residents have been forced to remain in their destroyed homes, some with beds floating on water, and have no choice but to stay in those conditions resulting in illness and hygiene concerns.

Nokulunga Manyathi (39) who resides in Kenton-on-Sea, in an area called Huisplain, was also affected by the floods and she provided Karibu! with pictures of the damages caused by the rain. She says that the Ndlambe Municipality did not visit her community to follow up on the damages caused by the rain despite being aware that the community was struggling with damaged houses.

"I am really sad from how poor I have turned because of the rain. I have no house or food and I have to go around asking for a place to sleep and for food." She told Karibu! that she needs assistance with rebuilding a home because her house is still filled with water, and she has nothing left. She said that the municipality has done nothing to help in this hardship that she and her husband are facing. In fact, the couple have been waiting for the municipality to build them a house as was promised years ago.

All around the Eastern Cape, communities have been waiting on the promise of government housing for years. The rain has further ruined the lives of many working class community members as many have lost everything in Bathurst, Port Alfred, Kenton and Marseille.

The pictures provided are the present conditions of houses that were affected by the flood. There are no shelters or food provided for those who lost a house due to natural disasters.

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