

Heavy Rains Reign Fear in Makhanda, Eastern Cape!

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In October, heavy rains hit Makhanda for almost a week, causing destruction and displacement in informal settlements like Nkanini, Phaphamani, Zolani, and Nyongweni. Many people lost their homes, and water flooded into people's houses, forcing some of them to look for alternative accommodation with relatives and friends, while some had to stay in community halls.

Now, the South African Weather Service warns of disruptive snow for the Eastern Cape and more rain. They warned that the weather conditions are expected to make driving conditions dangerous and difficult.

Kingston Matiki (40) a resident from Makhanda is frustrated with the municipality's slow response to rebuilding homes and helping people affected by October floods in these areas. Now with the current weather warning, people are scared and uncertain about their shelter and the safety of their families. "Every time it rains, people have to leave their homes and stay with relatives. We can't change the weather, but our housing department must build safe homes for our people. We vote for them every five years, but nothing changes," shared Matiki.

A 34-year-old resident of Makhanda, Babalwa Baduza, who is also a mother of two shared that the recent floods severely affect women, who are often the primary caregivers and heads of households, especially in communities in informal settlements such as Nkanini. Women face serious challenges, feeling vulnerable and helpless in temporary shelters after they have lost everything in the floods. Unfortunately, the government's response has been lacking, leaving women and children, who reside in shacks, and mud houses to suffer the effects of the disaster alone.

School final exams are also affected, parents fear for their children as many have to walk to school and write exams. Learners at informal and rural areas of Makhanda say it's hard for them to go to school as some stay far away and the roads are flooded and muddy. They say when it rains hard the schoolyards also get flooded with water.

The Makhanda community is calling for all residents and community members to unite and support each other during this crisis. People cannot wait much longer for government intervention which has not yet come despite over a week of devastating rains. Houses and yards are flooded with water, making it difficult to move around without soaking in the water, which is also affecting furniture in households.

It is strange for the people of Nkanini and other similarly affected parts of Makhanda to hear stories about how the 'government of national unity' government is doing very well delivering service to communities when they are severely affected, and no one responds to them.

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