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■ KWAZULU-NATAL

Plan to relocate shack dwellers

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IN THE wake of the devastating shack fires that claimed three lives in Clermont, Durban, last week, the KwaZulu-Natal government says it has set aside just over R1 billion to eradicate slums across the province.

The Clermont fire gutted 16 shacks, while at Blackburn Road shanty town up to 10 shacks caught fire. No fatalities were reported.

Speaking after visiting the devastated community of Blackburn near Cornubia in the north of Durban yesterday, the MEC for human settlements, Peggy Nkonyeni, said preparations to relocate the affected communities were at an advanced stage.

Nkonyeni said the Blackburn community would be resettled in Cornubia's phase two, while the community of Clermont would be relocated to the Emapheleni housing scheme, which is almost ready for occupation.

"This community will be moved to Cornubia, and we all know that phase two of that housing project is about to get off the ground as money has already been set aside. So this community is going to benefit from this programme. While waiting for the project we have also pledged to improve their current dwellings," added Nkonyeni.

She further highlighted that KZN had up to 700 informal settlements and that the provincial government already had a programme to eradicate them.

"In order to eradicate all of them we have set aside almost R1bn," Nkonyeni said, adding that the government was not looking to move people from one shanty town to another.

Speaking on behalf of the community of Blackburn Road, Nkosi Mazize said that as community leaders they would oversee that the allocation of houses was not mired in corruption.

"Only those who are registered and are supposed to get those houses will be moved. We will ensure that there is no corruption and nepotism in the relocation process," Mazize said.