

Hundreds of KZN Flood victims finally rehomed

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THE KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements says 736 Temporal Residential Units (TRU) have been built in the province to date, and 683 of them have already been handed over to families affected by the April and May floods.

Four months after the floods, KZN Department of Human Settlements spokesperson Mbutelo Baloyi said the first phase of the construction of TRUs had been completed in uMzinyathi, King Cetshwayo and uMkhanyakude districts.

"To date, 736 TRUs have been completed across KwaZulu-Natal to relocate families who are being housed in mass care centres after the devastating April floods. Other TRUs are in various stages of construction.

"The construction of the full quota of 70 planned units in uMzinyathi, 42 in King Cetshwayo and 40 in uMkhanyakude add to the 243 in iLembe and 104 in eThekweni," he said.

months there were still people effectively homeless because of the floods.

"Emergency accommodation is precisely that: for an emergency. Not a way of storing people as if they were luggage. When you see how much NGOs have achieved with their limited resources and compare it with how little government has delivered, it is shocking."

IFP spokesperson on social development in KZN, Les Govender, said the government should not continue to contain people in the shelters. He said community halls were not meant for daily living and lacked adequate sanitation facilities and space.

"It's not enough for the Department of Social Development and NGOs to provide donations to sustain these people – the solution is to house these people permanently elsewhere."

The DA in KZN on Monday outlined proposals to assist flood victims still living in community halls.

These recommendations – which have been submitted to the provincial government – come after the party

Baloyi said the targeted units for eThekweni were 312. He added that TRUs in construction included those where platforms had already been cut (857); slabs laid (822); and those at wall plate level (735).

The departments said a total of R33.1 million had been paid to service providers. Invoices amounting to R5.1m were being processed.

He added that the process of linking affected families in mass care centres across the province with land parcels for the construction of TRUs was ongoing.

According to the eThekweni Municipality, there are 82 shelters still occupied by flood victims awaiting homes, while 36 have now closed. The open shelters are housing more than 6 000 flood victims with some shelters housing more than 300 people.

Pastor Leonard Gcabashe, who heads operations at a shelter in ward 8, Embo, near Hillcrest, said there was no clear word about the plans to rehome the 58 flood victims in the shelter and donations were dwindling.

Director at the Denis Hurley Centre and former chairperson of the eThekweni Task Team on Homelessness, Raymond Perrier, said it was shocking and inhumane that after so many

went on oversight visits to some of the community halls across eThekweni.

After the visits, the DA submitted a complaint to the South African Human Rights Commission, requesting that the conditions be urgently investigated.

DA KZN leader Francois Rodgers said Premier Shile Zikalala should release funding from the contingency reserves to speed up delivery of TRUs.

The DA also proposed that the KZN Department of Social Development actively engage with the flood victims on an ongoing basis and for social workers to provide continued psycho-social support.

It called for the department to assist NGOs so they can continue providing residents with food, sanitary and other essentials; and to provide flood victims in halls with Sassa vouchers for disaster relief.

In response, KZN Department of Social Development spokesperson Mhlabunzima Memela said there was nothing new in the DA suggestions.

"The department has a team of social workers who continue to provide psycho-social support to victims and has been issuing SRDs to victims. "It has also been involved in helping those who lost grant documents."

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