**51 killed by floods, lightning- Zimbabwe**

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<https://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/51-killed-by-floods-lightning/>

FIFTY-ONE people have been killed in adverse weather incidents since the commencement of the rainy season, with property and infrastructure valued at US$187 000 having been destroyed. Among the victims were two police officers aend their four-month-old daughter, who died while attempting to cross the flooded Kana River in Gokwe recently.

The Department of Civil Protection’s latest situation report shows that 28 people were injured as a result of inclement weather, while 1 601 households were affected.

In total, 104 schools and 12 clinics countrywide suffered varying degrees of damage.This comes as the Government has activated civil protection structures to swiftly respond to the incidents.

Reads the report: “The 2023/24 rainfall season has commenced and heavy rains have been received across the country.

“Damages to houses and social amenities infrastructure have been reported from October 12, 2023 up to date.

“Government has activated all civil protection structures at national and sub-national level.”

The authorities have since released 50 tonnes of maize for each province and fuel to facilitate rapid assessments and dispatching of food relief.

The report states that strong winds and rains destroyed a classroom and a storeroom at Nengasha Primary School, Matabeleland North province. The value of property destroyed stands at US$3 576.

At St Francis Xavier Primary School in Matabeleland North, property worth US$13 666 was destroyed. Three classroom blocks had their roofs blown off by strong winds.

In Masvingo, 13 households in Runyararo West were affected by heavy rains on December 11, with flash floods hitting the area.

In Gutu district, 52 houses were damaged, while lightning killed a child and injured two other minors.

At Hwahwa Prison, Midlands province, 20 staff quarters were damaged, while nine inmates’ cells had their roofs blown off. The value of the property damaged is US$56 774.

Lightning struck a hut in Chirumanzu, killing three members of the same family.

“On December 17, a drowning incident occurred in Gokwe South when the driver of a Ford Ranger with five occupants miscalculated and drove across the flooded Kana River before he drowned with his wife and four-month-old daughter.

“Two other passengers, aged 19 and five, escaped from the Ford Ranger and swam to safety.”

The department said the Government must expedite the disbursement of devolution funds to rehabilitate infrastructure that had been destroyed.

“There is an urgent need to rehabilitate the (Hwahwa) prison as it poses a threat to prison officers in the management of inmates and also health-related risks as most inmates’ cells are flooded,” the report continues.

The department also said it was preparing for disaster response and management, with forecasts showing that the country might be hit by two tropical cyclones during the current rainy season.

Last year, Southern Africa was affected by 11 cyclones, including Freddy, which left a trail of destruction in Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar.