Man killed by lightning strike and 6 others injured in KZN- South Africa

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Thunderstorms have claimed the life of one person and left six others injured in KwaZulu-Natal. The bad weather also left a trail of destruction in Glencoe, Dundee, in the uMzinyathi District Municipality and part of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality.

KZN Disaster Management teams jumped into action to provide residents of Sthembile township with relief after a thunderstorm wreaked havoc in and around Dundee on Monday night.

The KZN Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) had warned communities about the yellow Level 2 warning for severe thunderstorms expected in parts of the province from Monday evening until midnight.

Areas that were expected to be affected included the Alfred Duma (Ladysmith), Dannhauser, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (Underberg), eMadlangeni, Endumeni, Greater Kokstad, Impendle, Ingwe, Inkosi Langalibalele (Estcort), Giant’s Castle, Mpofana (Mooi River), Msinga, Newcastle, Nquthu, Okhahlamba, Richmond, Msunduzi, Ubuhlebezwe, uMngeni, uMuziwabantu and uMzimkhulu local municipalities.

Cogta spokesperson Siboniso Mngadi said: “Preliminary reports from the Provincial Disaster Management Centre indicate that a thunderstorm, lasting about 45 minutes, swept through the Sithembile township, outside Dundee, tragically claiming one life – an adult male who was struck by lightning.

“A further six people were injured as roofs and walls collapsed on them. Some victims were rushed to hospitals, while others received treatment in their homes.”

Mngadi said several households in the township were flooded and fallen trees blocked roads. There was also significant damage to infrastructure, including roads, fences, and bridges. Several businesses suffered losses, including farmers who lost livestock and crops.

“Assessments indicate that about 173 households were damaged, affecting 1 211 people,” Mngadi said.

He said teams were on the ground conducting further assessments.

Mngadi said teams also recorded destruction in areas in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality.

“Reports indicate that a few houses were damaged in different local municipalities, with no injuries or fatalities reported at this time. However, assessments are also continuing in these areas,” Mngadi said.

Cogta MEC Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi conveyed her condolences to the family of the man who died and wished a speedy recovery to those who were injured.

Sithole-Moloi encouraged disaster management centres in municipalities to continue conducting assessments and to help those affected.

“Our disaster response teams will continue to provide relief to the affected families. We are deeply concerned about the recurring devastating rains in our province, which is an alarming indication of the impact of global warming,” Sithole-Moloi said.

“Our department has been issuing weather warnings and recently launched a Multi-Agency Disaster Awareness campaign, collaborating with various stakeholders to raise awareness, mitigate risks, and respond effectively to disasters. While some weather incidents are unavoidable, we encourage our residents to heed warnings and relocate to safer areas when advised.”

Sithole-Moloi said Cogta had collaborated with other departments, such as Social Development and Human Settlements, to ensure that the victims received support.

The MEC said that their teams had distributed blankets, plastic sheets, mattresses, and food parcels to the affected families as part of the relief efforts. Public facilities such as community halls had been made available for temporary shelter.

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