



## Limpopo families count losses after storm

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By Peter Muthambi & Sydney Masinga

Louis Trichardt - More than 100 families in seven villages in the Makhado local municipality in Limpopo were left homeless after their houses were damaged or destroyed by a devastating storm on Sunday night.

The affected villages are Vleifontein, Mpheni, Elim, Munzhedzi, Maila, Mpofu and Nthabalala.

A three-year-old girl, Andile Maluba, was killed in Vleifontein after the wall of her family's home collapsed on her. Her mother, Avhurengwi Maluba, rushed with the injured child to nearby Elim Hospital but she died on the way there.

"My baby was not supposed to die like this. She was not supposed to die!" said a distraught Maluba in tears.

About 20 residents in the various villages were slightly injured during the storm. They were treated for cuts and bruises at Elim Hospital and released, which was confirmed by Limpopo Department of Health and Social Development spokesperson, Cecil Motsepe.

On Tuesday, Clayson Monyela, spokesperson for the Limpopo Department of Local Government and Housing, said the provincial disaster management centre had sent officials to the affected areas to assess the damage.

"We will probably get a report before the end of the day (Tuesday) from the officials who were sent to assess the damage. The report will give us direction as to the amount of intervention that is expected from the department. The municipality is currently providing tents and food parcels to affected families," said Monyela.

He sent condolences to Maluba's family on behalf of the department.

"We are in the process of organising the building of a house for the family. It will probably be handed over to them within the next two months," added Monyela.

He said the department would decide whether new houses for families affected by the storm would be built or repaired after it received the damage assessment report.

A resident of Vleifontein village, Melita Thaha, said the storm, which hit at about 9pm on Sunday evening, was over fairly quickly.

"But my whole house fell down and I don't know what to do now. All my furniture was damaged during the storm. My children couldn't go to school on Monday because their school uniforms were all wet. It is even worse now because we do not have a place to stay," said the single mother of five.

Thaha said the area needed the government's assistance because many members of the community were now homeless.

Makhado municipality spokesperson Louis Bobodi said people who had lost their homes were given tents, blankets and food parcels on Tuesday.

"At least 440 people reported that they were affected by the hailstorm in our municipality, and we are still waiting for the disaster management officials to update us about the extent of the damage,"

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he added. - BuaNews