

## **19-month-old baby dies and 122 shacks destroyed by fire: Duma in touch with Minister of Department of Human Settlements as part of assisting affected families**

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma

19 July 2025

Kennedy Road Informal Settlements: Following a fire that resulted in the death of a 19-month-old baby, I am engaging with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane.

The fire originated from a burning candle and it destroyed 122 shacks.

We wish to report that a roving team involving officials from the National Department of Human Settlements, the Provincial Department of Human Settlements, and the eThekweni Municipality is already working out a plan to speed up the delivery of building material.

We will await the finalization of the verification process by disaster teams from eThekweni and COGTA.

Importantly, officials from my office have already met with the families of the deceased in Kennedy Road Informal Settlements.

We send our deepest condolences to the families following the sad passing of the following souls:

1. Ms Nonhle Mbango (25)
2. Bandile Zulu (19-month-old)

At this stage our focus is to ensure that extended families in Mount Frere and Umzimkhulu are properly informed about the tragedy.

Sadly, Ms Nonhle Mbango buried her father just weeks ago.

Kennedy Road Informal Settlements are always affected by fires and natural disasters such as floods.

Critically, we remain worried about the fact that residents who originally lived there were relocated to the newly built houses in Waterloo and double-story homes just across Kennedy Road.

In our meeting with the Minister last week with the Mayor of eThekweni, Cllr Cyril Xaba, we agreed on the need to enforce the by-laws. This will help to prevent people from reoccupying or renting shacks.

Notwithstanding these issues, we understand the fact that people are moving to eThekweni and other secondary cities in search of socio-economic opportunities.

These are realities that we are grappling with.

Finally, we are working with Ward 25 Cllr Themba Mkhize to assist the families to bury their loved ones.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

Ndabezinhle Sibiya | 082 375 4742 | Spokesperson | MEC for Transport and Human Settlements