

Human remains removed to Phoenix Mortuary: Duma expresses his appreciation to the South African Police Service K9 Unit and offers to be closer to the family of the deceased

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

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Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: Just after midnight I received a call from distressed community members about the ravaging fire in Effingham Informal Settlements in Ward 34, eThekweni.

Sadly, Ayanda Ziqethu (29) from the Eastern Cape perished in that fire, which destroyed more than 20 shacks.

We wish to commend the SAPS K9 Unit, as assigned by the Provincial Commissioner Lt General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, for working with our team from Human Settlements and eThekweni Disaster Management Unit to remove, in a dignified way, the remains of the deceased.

The next few days are going to be extremely difficult for Ziqethu family members who are travelling from the Eastern Cape.

As indicated this morning, I have assigned a team from my office to liaise with the family during this period.

We have agreed that social workers must be assigned to be on standby and provide professional counselling to the family.

Identifying Ayanda will be very traumatic. There are challenging processes that often rely on DNA analysis and forensic methods.

We state this because fire can significantly alter the appearance of human remains, making them difficult to identify and distinguish from others.

Critically, forensic experts will also need to differentiate between trauma that occurred before the fire and fractures and alterations caused by the fire itself.

As this family goes through this traumatic experience, we offer to be with them.

Finally, the Roving Team comprising Human Settlements—national and provincial—and eThekweni Municipality Disaster Team has finished profiling the affected families.

I am in constant liaison with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembu Simelane and the Mayor of eThekweni, Cyril Xaba as part of accelerating interventions for the 29 affected family members.

We commend the Minister for her swift response, especially when we are faced with disasters requiring emergency houses and building materials.

Working in an integrated fashion, we offer to do everything possible to ensure that the people of Effingham Informal Settlements rebuild their lives.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

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