

Raging fire destroys 700 structures in Jika Joe informal Settlements leaving between 400 and 500 residents, mainly females, homeless: Duma is liaising with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane, who is now scheduled to visit KwaZulu-Natal this week. The Minister will be accompanied by the Executive Director for Un-Habitat.

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

09 August 2026

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: On Women's Day, the majority of residents of Jika Joe informal settlements, mainly females, are homeless following a raging fire that destroyed approximately 700 shacks.

We salute Umsunduzi Municipality Disaster Management team for their swift response as guided by the Mayor Cllr Mzi Thebolla and the council.

We express our deepest appreciation to the following partners:-

- South African Police Service;
- Shoprite;
- Red Cross;
- Gift of the Givers;
- City Hope.

Importantly, the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Mxolisi Mkhize, has been with residents as part of speeding up the profiling of the affected victims.

By 13h00, more than 400 individuals had already been profiled.

Our main focus is to ensure that we bring on board the Department of Home Affairs, Social Development, and other relevant state agencies.

Critically, I am liaising with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane, who has offered to set aside time to visit KwaZulu-Natal this week. She will be accompanied by the UN-Habitat Director who will inaugurate the UN-Habitat Country Office.

The Minister will receive a report on Jika Joe and inspect houses built by women.

We recall that in the past, women were not allowed to own properties and businesses.

It is for this reason we are not only accelerating the construction of houses for women but also fast-tracking their entry into the entire value chain of construction.

In line with the Minister's title deeds Friday programme, we are handing over title deeds to women and moving with speed to clear the title-deed backlog.

We understand that the ownership of their houses, built by the state, will ensure their socio-economic empowerment.

This will assist in fighting gender-based violence and sustain their independence.

Finally, it should be remembered that the Department, working with Umsunduzi Municipality and the National Department of Human Settlements set aside R445 million to build new houses for the residents of Jika Joe Informal Settlement.

More than 400 hundred families have been accommodated in this housing project.

Unfortunately, some shacks have been rented out to new families.

Other shacks were initially rented to foreign nationals but were taken over and occupied by South Africans before the fire. Clearly, this has become a moving target.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma.

Enquiries

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