Warning against uncontrolled fires in residential areas and along major routes—RTI on full alert as ravaging fire destroys 208 shacks in Masinenge Informal Settlements: Following Duma's engagement with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane and the Mayor of Ray Nkonyeni Cllr Zodwa Mzindle, roving teams are speeding up the delivery of building materials

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

17 October 2026

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: We have engaged with the Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane, and the Mayor of Ray Nkonyeni Local Municipality, Cllr Zodwa Mzindle, following a fire that destroyed more than 208 shacks in Masinenge Informal Settlements.

The fire broke out in the early hours of the morning, and the cause is unknown at this stage.

Critically, we are warning residents and motorists about persisting dry, windy conditions accompanied by heatwaves.

Such conditions are dangerous, as they spread fire rapidly—leaving behind a trail of destruction. Residents must therefore be extra careful when starting fires.

Equally, when approaching uncontrolled fires, we request motorists not attempt to drive through. They must stop to avoid colliding with a stationary vehicle.

Regarding Masinenge, a roving team led by the Head of the Department of Human Settlements, Max Mbili, is liaising with a team from the National Department of Human Settlements as part of ensuring the delivery of building material to the affected residents.

In our discussion with the mayor, we emphasized the need to speed up the profiling of the victims so that no one is left behind and that legitimate residents who have suffered are prioritized.

It should be remembered that we have been experiencing reoccurring ravaging fires in Masinenge and we have consistently intervened.

We have in the past provided building material for the residents as a temporal measure while the construction of more than 882 permanent houses proceeded on the other hand.

This is part of Masinenge Slums Clearance Housing Project.

Critically, we moved more than 586 residents to the newly built double-storey homes.

Weeks ago, we handed over keys and more than 399 title deeds to residents together with the Deputy of Human Settlements Tandi Mahambehlala.

We, however, wish to caution once again residents against renting their houses and moving back to Masinenge Informal Settlements.

This area is always affected by fires and natural disasters such as floods.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

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