



AZAPO

AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

TO: ALL MEDIA HOUSES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: AZAPO SECRETARY FOR PUBLICITY & INFORMATION

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2024

SUBJECT: AZAPO STATEMENT ON THE DESTRUCTIVE FLOODS IN THE NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY

AZAPO is hurt by the continuing neglect of residents in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and broader parts of the Eastern Cape during the destructive floods that hit the province and other affected areas in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng over the past few days.

AZAPO submits that the extent of the damage was to be expected, in particular, affecting the Black Townships of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal area. **AZAPO** believes and knows that things wouldn't have panned out differently, in light of the negligence by the municipality in maintenance and renewal of the old, overwhelmed and dysfunctional infrastructure of the NMBM.

Any caring municipality would have taken special interest to ensure that all drainage systems are properly maintained, and any damaged systems are replaced with new and functional infrastructure.

The NMBM Infrastructure and Engineering Department has a litany of highly paid experts, both academically and with experience gained over many years of working in the department. These employees are the heart and soul of the efficacy of the systems of the municipality.

Over the years, very little work has been done to ensure that the metro municipality is saved from disasters like the ones that have left residents crippled over the past few days.

The heartbreaking visuals of the extensive damage experienced by homeowners and motorists, are a rude awakening that has left multitudes helpless and without secured shelter. Many of these residents are people who have worked very hard to ensure that their homes are safe and secured; yet the municipality has left them naked through its brazen negligence and deliberate recklessness, by failing to ensure that the spaces surrounding their homes are not a threat to them.

AZAPO is deeply disturbed by the end result of the negligence - and we categorically state that this is a natural disaster whose adverse effects could have been stopped on its tracks, in impacting the damning effects it delivered to already suffering residents who live in a dysfunctional municipality.

Most bludgeoning to the heart and soul of **AZAPO** is the indisputable fact that, while in white areas it is predominantly the streets that are affected, in Black areas - it is the very crux of the homes, where the flooding has penetrated and ripped out all hope from families.

It is general knowledge that governance within the NMBM, since 2016 when coalition politics became the norm, has deteriorated to the level that is not beneficial to the residents, especially those that do not enjoy the opulence of upper class living.

AZAPO categorically wishes to remind and state to the residents and voters of the NMBM that the last effort in maintenance and clearing of blockages in the drains in the Black townships of the NMBM was in December 2018, when a shared project worth R28 million was passed by the Council, after difficult talks and negotiations. That intervention is today only remembered for the bloody carnage it left behind, due to infighting and the resultant murders of over 30 people, in a deadly scramble for the control of the budget and the project.

Not one but two bridges have been collapsed in Kariega due to flooding rains in the past 5 months. A municipality report has given the reason for the first collapse in KwaNobuhle, as the incapacity of an overwhelmed stormwater infrastructure. An alternative road is now as a result crumbling; due to the extensive pressure caused by carrying the load that was carried by the fallen bridge.

The 2nd bridge, damaged in this week's flooding, is in the process of giving in - it is positioned less than 100 meters from the Nelson Mandela Bay Kariega offices and a link road to the Western areas of the municipality. How could the municipality not see the looming danger and fix it before it happened?

It took 15 years to give a green light for a bridge in KwaNobuhle, which collapse in 2005, to be fixed in 2020.

It will most probably take longer for the two affected bridges in this current year, the only reason for escalating the fixing of the two bridges would be the looming local government elections of 2026.

AZAPO reiterates that the living standards of our people will remain as they always are, devastatingly tough and eroding under all past and current governments in South Africa. We urge the residents affected and those yet to be affected by more disasters, to think carefully about the negligence and deliberate recklessness and use their vote to remove the coalition politics which cripple their lives and livelihoods.

The only way to do that effectively is to choose representatives who have the hearts and lives of residents in their everyday efforts to bring a better life for the masses that continue to suffer 30yrs into democracy.

AZAPO's heart goes out to everyone who has been negatively affected by the floods that brought massive destruction to their lives and homes over the past days. AZAPO sends wishes of restoration to those affected.

END

Issued by **AZAPO** Department of Publicity and Information (DPI).

Name: Jabu Rakwena

Unit 04 Ground Floor, 396 Cork Avenue, Ferndale JOHANNESBURG 2194
P. O. Box 4230, JOHANNESBURG 2000

Enquiries:

Email: jaburakwena@gmail.com

Jabu Rakwena 060 677 4257 or Nosipiwo Manona 065 899 4566

Office: **Publicity Secretary**