



Public Statement and Press Release

16 April 2020

President Ramaphosa
Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation
Disaster Management Command Structure

Regarding: Water Stressed Communities

We commend the South African government for its decisive response to Covid-19. The South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) came into existence after a Right to Food Conference in November 2014. Since then we have campaigned against food injustices and inequalities in the context of the worst drought in the history of the country. We have consistently built solidarities with drought affected communities. The Disaster Management Act was not triggered to respond to the drought and generally we did not have decisive leadership from government.

Many water stressed communities, without access to clean water through taps in homes, who are meeting water needs through polluted rivers, through standpipes in informal settlements, rapidly depleting boreholes and intermittent water access due to local government mismanagement, faced the drought and are now facing the second shock of Covid-19.

Minister Sisulu has taken decisive action and taken full control of our water resources as a public good. We commend her for this kind of leadership which ensures we can address water inequalities decisively. Her roll-out of 41 000 water tanks and her commitment to ensure schools are available for water provisioning are also very positive. However, in the midst of this crisis intervention many communities do not have their needs met. To address this the SAFSC has set up an online monitoring tool (<https://www.safsc.org.za/water-stressed-communities-map/>) for communities to track water delivery. As communities register and report their water stress issues, we will report regularly to the public and your office.

Thus far there are 19 communities: 12 in the Eastern Cape, 1 in Gauteng, 2 in Limpopo, 2 in Kwazulu-Natal, 1 in the Western Cape and 1 in the Free State that require urgent attention. Details on the water crisis in each community are available as an annexure to this statement.

Our demands are as follows:

1. Please make more detailed information available on where your roll outs are happening. We need a proper national map. The tweets from the Ministry are piecemeal and insufficient;
2. Many of the reported water stressed communities, affected by the lingering drought in the Eastern Cape, need their borehole water recharged. This should be done immediately so these aquifers do not collapse;

3. All reported communities need water tanks delivered to them. We want this prioritised and we need a regular schedule made available to the public on when water tanks will be replenished;
4. All communities reported do not have access to water in nearby schools. As you promised, we want schools made available for water provisioning, under public health guidelines;
5. The Minister's calls to local governments not to be punitive with water supply is not being heeded. A stronger message has to be sent to local government to ensure uninterrupted water supply;
6. Many communities have reported on boreholes that are in disrepair. This needs to be addressed immediately;
7. Boreholes should also be provided to communities where this is feasible;
8. Many problems are also institutional related to weak water governance. There are major water infrastructure backlogs in several communities. Beyond immediate water relief through water tanks, schools and boreholes, we want the Minister to announce on measures and timelines to address these backlogs.

For further information, contact:

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Annexure: List of water affected communities, as listed on the *Water Stressed Community Map* on the safsc.org.za website:

	1. What is the name of your community / village?	2. Province	3. Where is your community, its actual location?	4. How long have you been experiencing water stress?	5. Explain the issues to us in detail
1	Xilinxla Village	Eastern Cape	Jekezi location in Nqamakwe Ward 19 under Councillor Noliso	It has been a year now	We've been getting water from Xilinxla Dam into Community taps but they has been closed for a whole year from February 2020. Because of drought. But we haven't been supplied with any help ever since.
2	Hamakuya	Limpopo	Vhembe District, Thulamela local municipality, ward 6, Chief Makuya	Water crisis is stress every day, it's even waste during this COVID-19 period	The communal borehole is broken and community are collecting water from the Langwe river.
3	makhushoaneng, dithabaneng and Makweng	Limpopo, Capricorn District, Lepelle nkumpi local municipality	Makhushoaneng, dithabaneng and Makweng, Lebowakhomo town, Lepelle Nkumpi ward 7 and 21	Water crisis is stress every day, it's even waste during this COVID-19 period	We have municipality water tanks and pipes closer our homesteads, and some of the tapes are communal. Water comes twice a week in other areas it's not even scheduled. We wait at the tape for hours or days queuing for water to come out. Sometimes we go back home without water in our containers. It's a crisis, but those who have their own boreholes are surviving without stress.
4	Machibini	KwaZulu Natal	Ward 15 Machibini (R618)	Since 2015, tap water ran for 2 days in May 2017 but disappeared entirely up to this day.	We have had no running tap water for over 5 years. Most residents of Machibini cannot afford JoJo tanks and for those who can, their rainwater is contaminated by coal dust from the Somkhele Mine. In July 2019, there was a protest for water in Machibini where 29 women were arrested. Umkhanyakude District Municipality allocated R17 million for the water crisis, but nothing has

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					been done in Machibini since their promise date which was August 2019.
5	Ndakeni maggabasini Bhukuveni malanda and Dinda	Eastern Cape	Ward 8 mbizana local municipality Alfred nzo district	For years I was born in the area I'm now 34 no taps were ever installed there no jojo tanks were ever provide for the community	People are sharing water from the small rivers with animals and it is not safe because they travel long distances to get water from the stream and now the little they have is running out and people are now getting sicknesses because they using dirty water that they sharing with animals to drink and cooking they have no choice because they can't find any water any where it's very terrifying people are living in such bad conditions
6	Manyiseni	KZN	Northern KZN	7 years	We have no source of water except rivers and wells that we are sharing with animals. Boreholes have been not working for more than 5 years, no one repairs them
7	Phuthaditjhaba, QwaQwa	Free State	The entire town of Phuthaditjhaba, including outlying villages in the QwaQwa region is affected. Bluegum bush is less affected but all other regions of this 500 000+ people settlement have zero access to tapped water.	6 months + with zero running water. About 5 years of intermittent cuts, up to a month long at a time.	For the past 5 years we have had water stress with intermittent cuts on a daily or weekly basis, but occasionally lasting many days or weeks. Last November, water stopped running entirely. By January, civil unrest broke out with riots, looting and a shutdown of the entire area. A steering committee and government funding were allocated but no action to date. Last week we got news that due to covid19 we would be getting water today (April 7th) but nothing has happened. Now news is updated that only some areas (hospitals, cbd and industrial area) will be getting water with the majority of residents still cut off. More disturbing is the lack of clear information about what the cause of the water

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					cuts actually is as we have several dams including sterckfontein in the vicinity.
8	Merweville	Western Cape	Beaufort West municipality	The Western Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since the Western Cape Karoo is experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded.	Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas.
9	Diepsloot	Gauteng	Ext 1,12 & 13 . these are informal settlements in Diepsloot. 2189	2 years	Little and farfetched government water in isolated tap systems
10	Graaff-Reinet - 6280	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
11	Aberdeen - 6270	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described

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12	Nieu Bethesda - 6286	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
13	Jansenville - 6265	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.

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14	Waterford - 6265	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
15	Klipplaat - 6255	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
16	Steytlerville - 6250	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.

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17	Willowmore - 6445	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
18	Rietbron - 6450"	Eastern Cape		The Eastern Cape Karoo is an arid to a semi-desert region in South Africa. Winter in the Eastern Cape Karoo has always been a time of relative drought whilst summer was the wet season. And even though humidity in summer was low, there was always random rain that came in the form of dramatic storms. This is no longer the case since we have been experiencing persistent drought since 2015.	We are experiencing the most severe drought ever recorded. The drought has been described as "the worst drought in a thousand years". Most dams have already run completely dry, leaving communities totally dependent on underground water. Borehole levels have dropped to an alarming capacity of less than 20% or are completely depleted in some areas. Despite recent rainfall, borehole and dam levels remain critically low.
19	Mthokwane	Eastern Cape	Willowvale, Nqabarha Administration	More than 2 years	There are taps but due to the drought they run dry most times of the year. Forced to use unclean water from low levelled rivers which maybe not safe to drink.