



## **Public Statement, Report and Press Release**

24 July 2020

**THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, MR. CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION, MS. LINDIWE SISULU**

**MINISTER OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA**

**THE NATIONAL DISASTER WATER COMMAND CENTRE**

**THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMAND STRUCTURE**

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### **REGARDING: WATER STRESSED COMMUNITY REPORT NO. 4**

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The national statement made by the President of South Africa last night wherein the fight to deal with corruption, the closure of public schools and the fact that South Africa has one of the highest outbreaks of Covid-19 in the world took centre stage, the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (“SAFSC”) was disappointed that the current access to water crisis that is currently unfolding in South Africa was not highlighted. SAFSC is therefore left without any option by to report for the fourth time and publicly write to the President of South Africa his excellency Mr. Matalama Cyril Ramaphosa, the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, her excellency Lindiwe Sisulu and the Minister for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs her excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, requesting that urgent action

be taken in order to provide clean water so as to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to create an environment that is not harmful to people's health or well-being.

The importance of water cannot be emphasised enough. Without water humans will die. However, during the covid-19 pandemic, water is a key player in curbing the spread of the virus by providing sanitation and to allow society to function with some level of normality. Without water, the spread of the virus could be far greater.

SAFSC has shared, publicly and to the Department of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, three reports on water stressed communities, based on our community driven self-reporting tool on the following dates:

- The First report was issued on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April and is available here <https://www.safsc.org.za/public-statement-and-press-release-water-stressed-communities/>
- The Second report was issued on the 29<sup>th</sup> April and is available here <https://www.safsc.org.za/public-statement-and-press-release-water-stressed-communities-report2/>
- The Third report was issued on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May available here: <https://www.safsc.org.za/public-statement-and-press-release-water-stressed-communities-report-3/>

In the Third Report, SAFSC reported that there was water stress in 32 additional communities, which increased the overall tally from 47 to 79: 57 in the Eastern Cape, 3 in the Western Cape, 3 in Kwa-Zulu Natal, 1 in the Free State, 1 in Gauteng and 14 in Limpopo. In Third report SAFSC further highlighted the manner in which corruption and mismanagement in the Eastern Cape by water service institutions has severely affected particular communities of Mbizana and Ntabankulu.

In all three previous reports, SAFSC called on the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation to be responsive and to act decisively to meet the needs of these communities. Unfortunately, up to now SAFSC have not had a response from the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation nor has the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and

Sanitation indicated publicly or to the specific communities listed in the previous reports, that any action will be undertaken to provide water.

#### Fourth Report:

In this fourth statement, SAFSC reports that an additional 9 communities have utilised our community driven online monitoring tool. The total currently sits at 88 water stressed communities. Some of these communities have not had access to adequate water supply for over 3 years or more. SAFSC online map records the follow areas:

- 63 in the Eastern Cape,
- 4 in the Western Cape, 3 in Kwa-Zulu Natal,
- 1 in the Free State,
- 1 in Gauteng and
- 16 in Limpopo.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Minister for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, not renewing the Declaration of a National Disaster for the current national drought, the impact of not having access to basic supply of 25 litres per person per day within 200 meters of a household without interruption of access to water for more than 7 days as detailed by Regulations Relating to Compulsory National Standards and Measures to Conserve Water, 2001 is as follows:

- People's right to live in an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being is being violated;
- People's right to have access to sufficient food is being violated;
- People's right to life is being violated;
- People's right to dignity is being violated;
- People's right to basic health care is being violated; and
- Children's rights to to basic nutrition, shelter and basic health care services is being violated.

#### Some examples of the current plight of the 88 communities:

The residents of Majuba Nek, Sterkspruit have been relying on rain-water and have received little to no support with regards to water and food relief.

The Ludeke Dam, part of the Greater Mbizana Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme, was completed in 2014. But the Mbizana municipality claimed it had run out of funds to pipe water to our villages. Government water tanks (1 x 5000L tank per village for +/-10 000 people) were delivered and filled on 17 April 2020. Bhukuveni tank was damaged and could not be filled. Since then tanks at Ndakeni and one other village were only refilled again on 19 May. Bhukuveni tank has not been replaced nor refilled. Currently, therefore the community only has access to 2 litres of water per person (+/- 10 000 people) for four months.

The Bonnytoun Informal Settlement, (Plumstead/Wynberg border), has been experiencing water shortage for the past 20 years.

In the District of Nqamakwe, there are 56 rural areas with the ward and there are only three tanks. The tap ran dry June 2020.

The Open Space community in Philippi, is a small informal settlement within Brown's Farm Philippi. They have been experiencing water shortage since 18 May 2020. The taps are 'empty' they are no longer producing water.

Urgent intervention by the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation and the National Disaster Water Command Centre:

Although there is a pandemic and a water crisis gripping South Africa, SAFSC acknowledges the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation's work during the beginning of the lockdown period to procure, install and delivery water to various communities. However, more effort is needed to address the urgent need to provide water and sanitation to the 88 communities in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to make sure the communities live in an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being and to provide access to sufficient water.

SAFSC therefore demands the following from the Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation and the National Disaster Water Command Centre:

- To immediately procure water, water tanks, installation of tanks and/or fix tanks in terms of directive 7 of the Water and Sanitation Emergency Procurement Directives gazetted and promulgated on 15 April 2020 in order to avert a water crisis;
- To respond to SAFSC public statements and reports and whether any action will be undertaken within one week;
- To commence with the processes outlined in section 63 of the Water Services Act, 108 of 1997 to have either the Provincial Departments of Water or the National Department of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation to take over the functions of the various water service institutions wherein the 88 communities are situated in order to make sure that there is water provided on a long term basis to such communities;
- To commence an audit process on the current corruption or mal-administration that has prevented the 88 communities' rights to have access to water prior to the declaration that Covid-19 was a National Disaster.

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