



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### **Communities warned to relocate from the vicinity of rising rivers and dams**

23 February 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation would like to announce that for the first time in as many years, the Vaal Dam is expected to be 100% full. Currently its level stands at 81,6% and it is rising fast, thanks to the torrential rains that are falling in most parts of the country.

According to projections by hydrologists in the department, Bloemhof Dam in North West is expected to be 100% full by Saturday and eight sluice gates will be opened to avert the dam from bursting. The Vaal Dam will open 2 of its sluice gates on Sunday.

In the past week parts of South Africa experienced torrential rains due to the Ex- Tropical Cyclone Dineo in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. When the storm dissipated it was followed by more torrential rains that were caused by tropical conditions that have their origins in the equator.

Against this background, the department would like to warn all communities that live on the floodplains of the two dams to move as soon as possible as they would be exposed to possible flooding. In Northern Cape the Augrabies Falls experienced a life-threatening flash flooding although no one was swept away.

In North West, with the exception of Molatedi and Klein Marico dams, all provincial dams are full to capacity. The department is closely monitoring Mearns Dam in KwaZulu-Natal whose level has zoomed to an astounding 121,83%. No one has died as a result of the water level of the dam but the department, together with the Provincial Disaster Management Committee have warned people living on the dam's catchment to relocate immediately. The Umgeni storage system is currently at 54,32%. Individual dam levels in the province are as follows:

- Albert Falls – 29,36%
- Inanda – 63,59%
- Mearns – 121,83%
- Midmar – 67,45%
- Nagel – 87,45%
- Springrove – 74,55%

The Marico, Crocodile (West), Vaal, Vals, Wilge (FS), Caledon, Upper Orange and Tugela rivers are all flowing strongly and dams are already filling up. Care should be taken downstream of dams and on the floodplains of all rivers in the central and northern provinces. A number of flash floods already occurred, driven by high intensity, local rainfalls in areas like Newcastle, Wolmaransstad and Koster in North West, Koppies Dam in the Free State and lately near Augrabies in the Northern Cape.

Flood warning protocols are being activated to mitigate damage to property and prevent loss of life.



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Other dam levels are: Molatedi Dam (Groot Marico River) 50%, Hartbeespoort Dam 100% (gates opened) Roodekoppies Dam 106%, all 8 gates opened.

This morning, Gariiep Dam measured 71,8%, Bloemhof Dam 64,5% and Grootdraai Dam 102% (gates opened).

A combined flow in the Crocodile (West) River was at 1 200 cubic metres per second late yesterday. These flows will be joined by those from the Marico River as well as inflows from Botswana. The Limpopo River will continue to be monitored as these flows will reach it today. The Department will also keep on monitoring the lower Vaal and Orange Rivers which could impact on Douglas and the farmers downstream of the town.

It is very important for the public and authorities to continue monitoring rainfall forecasts, news bulletins and local social media and be very aware of possible flooding in low lying areas and riverside properties, settlements, floodplains and low water bridges. Do not enter any deep water or fast flowing shallow water.

Despite the rising water levels, the department appeals to South Africans to continue their adherence to water restrictions until further notice.

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

**For more information contact : Sputnik Ratau on 082 802 3432 or**

**For media releases, speeches and news visit the Water & Sanitation portal at:**  
[www.dwa.gov.za](http://www.dwa.gov.za)