



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Water situation in Eastern Cape is a source of concern

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The water situation remains precarious in Eastern Cape where dam levels continue to drop by an average one percent weekly. The latest dam levels report by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) estimates the province's levels at 48,3%. This is a drop by 13% compared to the same period last year.

In an attempt to prevent a looming catastrophe, the Minister of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu, this week met with Premier Oscar Mabuyane and the Mayor of Butterworth to discuss a comprehensive approach by government to deal with the water situation in the affected towns.

Butterworth and Queenstown are among the worst-hit towns by extremely dry conditions that have afflicted parts of the province.

However, Limpopo, which is also experiencing dry conditions because of the high temperatures, has improved slightly from 48,2% to 49,1% this week. Tzaneen Dam in Mopani District has stabilized slight after sliding its level to 5,5% last week. Recently, DWS, the provincial Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs department and Mopani District Municipality decided to ask Minister Sisulu to to gazette for stringent restrictions and to prohibit the abstraction of water for irrigation as this may lead to Day Zero.

Worst hit areas in Modjadji and Greater Letaba are already receiving tankered water to alleviate besieged communities from a desperate situation.

After the heavy rains that soaked most parts of the country recently, scorching temperatures have resurfaced with towns such as Upington, Lephalale, Phalaborwa and Thohoyandou reaching a maximum 40 degrees Celcius. According to the South African Weather Services, the heat wave is expected to continue until this weekend when scattered thundershowers fall in areas like Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

Despite the heavy rains in KwaZulu-Natal, most towns that fall under Mkhanyakude and Zululand continue to experience acute water shortages. Jozini residents, about 200 km north of Durban, have been without potable water for months because of the absence of rain. The average dam level in the region is estimated at 47,6% while the areas that receive much rainfall in the past weeks have zoomed to 70,3%.

The Vaal Dam in Gauteng is stable at 67% while smaller dams in Pretoria are bursting at the seams. Bronkhorstpruit Dam, east of the Capital City received much of the recent rains and has gone up to 75,9% while Bon Accord has gone up to 108,4%

Against the background of unpredictable weather patterns, the Department of Water and Sanitation is appealing to all water users to continue saving water and use it judiciously. Rural communities are encouraged to take advantage of heavy rains in their respective villages and practise water harvesting.

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