

70213E RAINY SEASON DEATH TOLL REACHES 113

Maputo, 18 Feb (AIM) – The death toll from the storms and floods in the current rainy season, from October up until Sunday, now stands at 113, according to the latest information from Mozambique’s relief agency, the National Disasters Management Institute (INGC).

According to a Monday summary from the INGC, a total of 240,827 people have been affected by the disasters, of whom 185,897 were living in government-established temporary accommodation centres as of Sunday.

Because of the massive flooding on the Limpopo river, which completely submerged towns such as Chokwe and Canicado, the southern province of Gaza is the worst affected. 41 people have died in Gaza, and 170,950 people are living in the Gaza accommodation centres.

23 people died in the central province of Zambezia, and 21 in Nampula in the north. In the other eight provinces, the death toll was in single figures.

As for damage to property, 863 classrooms and six health units have been damaged. 374 of the damaged classrooms were in Zambeza, 217 in Gaza and 108 in Tete. The total number of pupils affected is 168,502 – alternative places to study have been found for the vast majority (161,548) of these children.

A cholera epidemic has now been confirmed in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The outbreak began on 29 January in the provincial capital, Pemba, and spread to the nearby districts of Metuge and Mecufi.

Up until Sunday, 386 cases of cholera had been confirmed – 237 in Pemba, 84 in Mecufi and 65 in Metuge. So far only two of the patients have died – a lethality rate of 0.52 per cent.

Persistent rainfall is expected to continue in central and northern Mozambique over the next five days. Between Tuesday and Sunday, between 100 and 250 millimetres of rain is expected to fall in parts of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Zambezia provinces.

Heavy rains, of between 150 and 300 millimetres, are forecast for central and western Zambia. Much of this rainfall is likely to flow down the Zambezi basin into Mozambique.

The lower Zambezi is already above flood alert level from Mutarara in Tete province, all the way to the river’s delta. After a period in which the river had gradually fallen, it is rising again. On Sunday, it was over a metre above the alert level at both the Caia and Marromeu measuring stations.

The Licungo river in Zambezia is in flood, and boats have so far rescued 313 people who were surrounded by water in the Nante region in Maganja da Costa district.

Ominously, a low pressure system has formed in the Mozambique Channel. It has not yet become a cyclone, and the United States Navy’s Joint Typhoon Warning Centre classifies it as a “tropical disturbance”.

On Monday morning, this weather system was in the middle of the Mozambique Channel, about half way between Beira and the western coast of Madagascar, and moving slowly southwards.

The National Meteorology Institute (INAM) says that it is in permanent contact with the regional weather centres in Pretoria and Reunion Island to monitor the development of this low pressure system.

(AIM)

Pf/ (521)