

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING VISIT AND  
HANDOVER OF FOOD RELIEF TO FLOOD-AFFECTED FAMILIES,  
IMPALA SPORT HALL, BA-PHALABORWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,  
MOPANI DISTRICT

26 FEBRUARY 2026

Programme Director,

MEC for COGHSTA, Mr Basikopo Makamu,

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Mr Ernest Rachoene,

Executive Mayor of Mopani District, Cllr Pule Shayi,

Mayor of Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality, Cllr Merriam Malatji,

Traditional Leaders,

Faith-Based Leaders,

Business Community,

Members of Communities,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Avuxeni, Ndi Matsheloni, Thobela, Good Morning, Goeie More,

Today, we gather here under very difficult and painful circumstances. The recent floods have left a trail of destruction across our beautiful province of Limpopo. Many families have lost their homes, their belongings, their livelihoods and tragically, some have lost their loved ones. Unfortunately, four precious lives were lost in these floods in this area, and several of our brothers and sisters are still recovering from injuries.

To the bereaved families, we extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences. Your pain is our pain. We mourn with you.

Programme Director, Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality was not spared from this disaster as it is one of the municipalities that were severely affected. Over 480 households were directly affected by heavy rainfall, experiencing water ingress, structural damage and flooding of their dwellings. Many more homes remain flooded and several households are still at risk should the rain persist. Both our urban and rural communities have been affected, particularly those in low-lying areas where vulnerabilities are greater.

The damage to infrastructure has been extensive, with nine municipal electrical infrastructure sites being affected. A total of 139 roads and 46 culverts and bridges sustained damage. This destruction has disrupted access to essential services, schools, workplaces and health facilities. We understand the frustration and hardship this has caused to our people and we want to assure you that government is not standing idle.

From day one of this disaster, our provincial government responded swiftly. Multidisciplinary teams were deployed to the ground to conduct assessments, provide rescue operations and coordinate relief efforts. We are grateful to our dedicated rescue teams who worked tirelessly, including the brave team that rescued 18 people from Kambaku Lodge. Their courage and commitment saved lives and we salute them.

We also wish to thank community members who showed care and love to one another during these trying times. Some families opened their homes to provide shelter to those who were severely affected. Others shared food, blankets and comfort. This is who we are as Africans—people inspired by

the spirit of Ubuntu. In moments of crisis, we stand together. We do not turn our backs on one another.

We appreciate the collaboration between the Municipality and Foskor Mine in addressing electricity faults in the Phalaborwa area. This partnership between the public and private sectors is commendable. It demonstrates that when we work together, we can respond more effectively to the needs of our people. We have also witnessed the private sector extending a helping hand through food relief and other forms of support in different affected areas. We highly commend these gestures of solidarity.

Programme Director, we are encouraged that the Municipality is doing everything within its means to restore the dignity of our people by accommodating those who were severely affected in community halls and ensuring that basic needs are met. As the provincial government, we are working hard to ensure that damaged infrastructure is restored. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure has already commenced with intervention programmes in many of the affected areas.

We must be honest: we cannot fix all the damage at once. The scale of destruction is significant. However, we ask for your patience as we prioritise the most severely affected areas and critical infrastructure. Our commitment is firm, we will rebuild and we will do so in a manner that strengthens resilience against future disasters.

Today, we have come here to provide food relief to families who were severely affected by these floods. This assistance may not replace what you have lost, but it is a gesture of support and solidarity. It is a reminder that you are not alone. Government stands with you.

As we move forward, we will continue to assess the full extent of the damage and work with national government to mobilise additional resources where required. We are also strengthening disaster preparedness and response systems to better protect our communities in the future.

To the people of Ba-Phalaborwa and Mopani District, we say: remain strong. Let us continue to support one another. Let us rebuild together. Out of this devastation, we will rise. Out of this pain, we will forge a stronger, more united Limpopo.

May God bless you; may He comfort those who mourn and may He protect our province from further harm.

I thank you.