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26 January 2021

## DISRUPTIVE RAINFALL OVER THE CENTRAL INTERIOR

Extra-Tropical Low *Ex-Eloise* has been widely covered in the news since the past weekend, from landfall south of Beira, Mozambique, with full Tropical Cyclone status during the early morning hours of Saturday, 23 January 2021. This system has left an extensive trail of destruction along its path over Mozambique as well as the north-eastern parts of South Africa and ultimately being downgraded to an Overland Tropical Depression. *Ex-Eloise* is now a much-weakened extra-tropical low pressure system and is currently situated over the south-western parts of Botswana as seen in Figure 1 below.

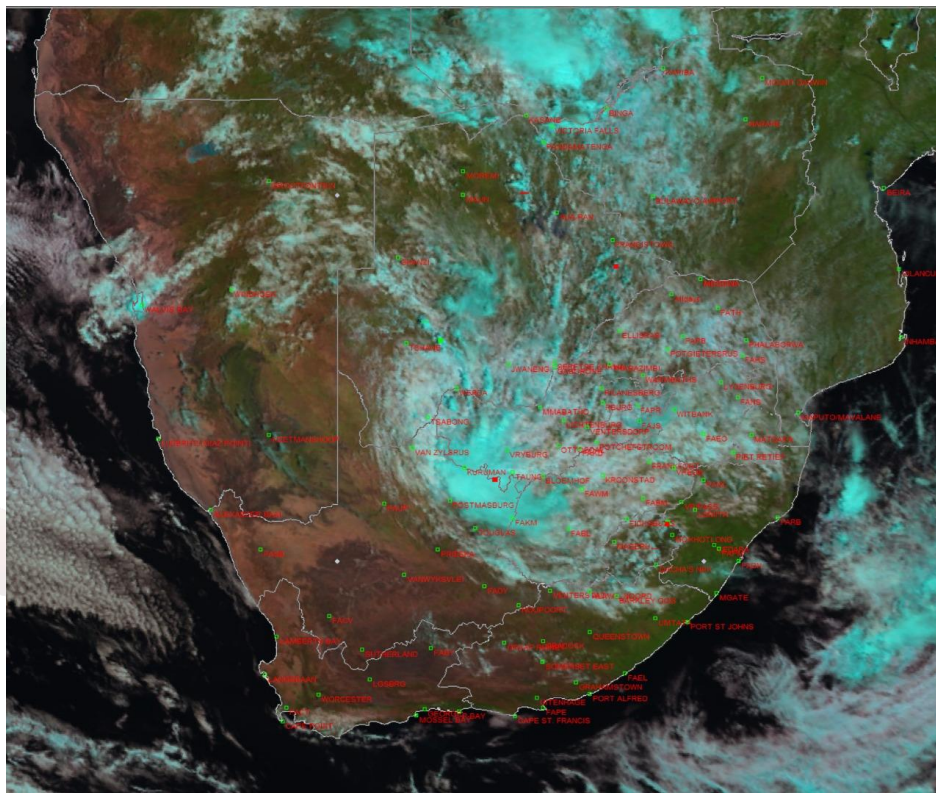


Figure 1: A geostationary satellite image (Meteosat Second Generation) of Southern Africa on Tuesday morning, 26 January 2021, indicating the position of *Ex-Eloise* over southwestern Botswana. Image courtesy EUMETSAT 2021

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Given the position of this low pressure system, and taking into account its clockwise rotation (in the southern hemisphere), a broad stream of tropically-sourced moisture is now being channeled southwards into the central parts of the country, extending over most of the Free State, North-West province and the north-eastern half of the Northern Cape where scattered to widespread of showers and thundershowers are expected from Tuesday afternoon (26 January 2021) onwards, continuing until the weekend.

A cold front will slip past the country during Wednesday, 27 January 2021. The arrival of the cold front will herald a linkage of weather systems, between the tropics and the extra-tropical regions. Such a juxtaposition of weather systems can typically be expected to contribute towards heavy rainfall over the central interior as the weather system moves from west to east and this case will be no exception.

Our numeric weather prediction (NWP) models are indicating significant amounts of rainfall to occur over the eastern parts of the Northern Cape, western parts of both the North-West Province and the Free State as seen in Figure 2 below. It is anticipated that this rainfall, associated with a broad band of showers and thundershowers will move slightly eastwards by Thursday, 28 January 2021. This will likely contribute to a drier day for the eastern parts of the Northern Cape, with the possible exception of the extreme north-eastern parts of last-mentioned region.

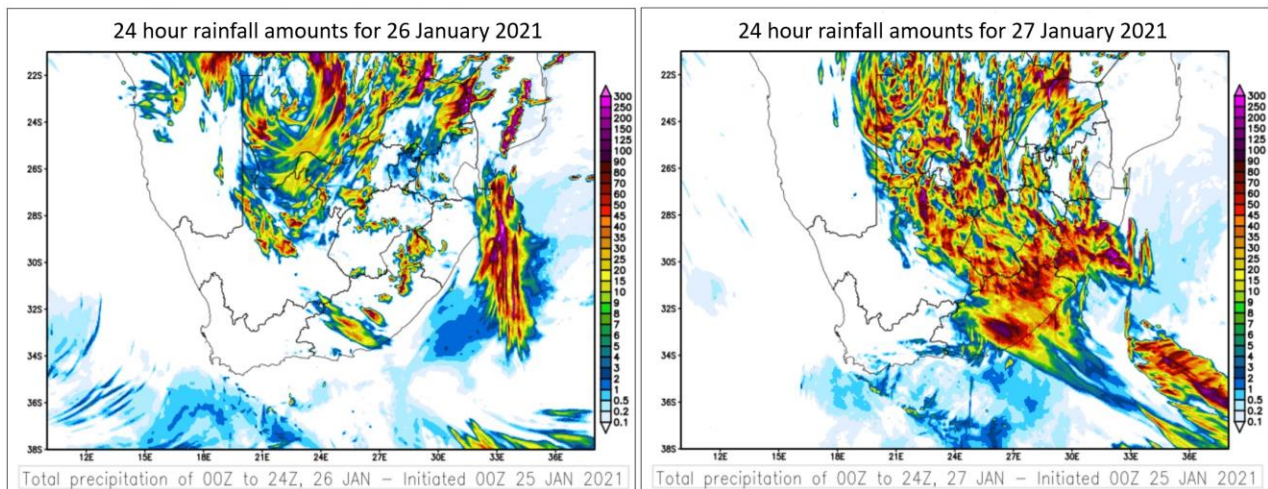


Figure 2: Unified Model SA4 accumulated rainfall amounts (mm) from 26 until 27 January 2021. Source: SA Weather Service.

Due to the recent normal to above normal rainfall that was experienced over the central interior, the soil moisture is still saturated in places, especially in the Free State along the N1 highway. Therefore, the biggest concern is flooding as well as loss or degradation of agricultural plantings due to excessive rainfall. Daytime temperatures (refer Figure 3) are also expected to be cooler this week which will contribute to a lower evaporation rate.

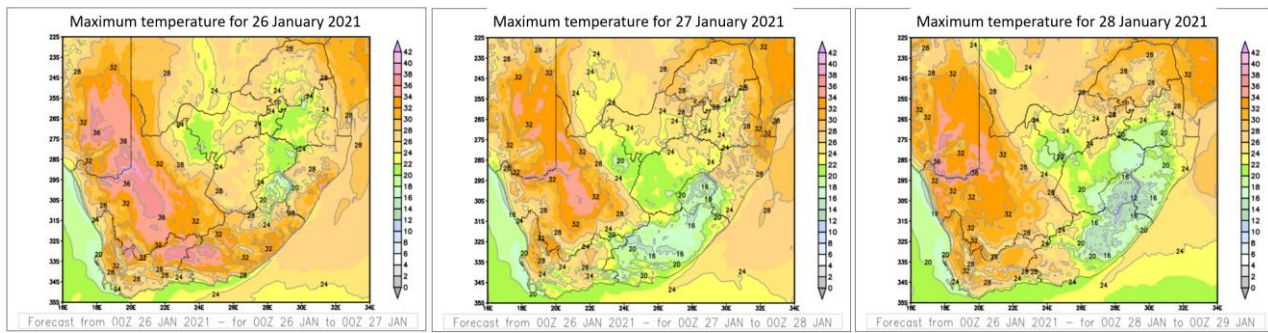


Figure 3: Unified Model SA4 maximum temperatures expected for South Africa from 26 until 28 January 2021. Source SA Weather Service.

The South African Weather Service has issued the following warning for disruptive rainfall valid from Tuesday afternoon, 26 January 2021, until Friday evening, 29 January 2021:

1. Yellow warning for disruptive rainfall expected over the western parts of the North-West Province and the extreme north-eastern parts of Northern Cape on Tuesday, resulting in flooding of low-lying areas, disruption to traffic and basic services as well as damage to crops and livestock.
2. Yellow warning for disruptive rainfall expected over the western parts of the North-West Province and the extreme north-eastern parts of Northern Cape, spreading to the western and central parts of Free State by Wednesday, resulting in flooding of low-lying areas, disruption to traffic and basic services and damage to crops and livestock.

The following impacts associated with disruptive rainfall can be expected:

1. Localised/flash flooding of low-lying areas, informal and formal settlements.
2. Impaired agricultural production due to flooding and damage to crops.
3. Difficult driving conditions (major- and dirt roads) due to reduced visibility and flooding of roads which can contribute to minor vehicle accidents and increased travel time.
4. Disruption to essential services (e.g. power cuts, network issues, interruption of water supply to smaller towns).
5. Vulnerable communities adjacent to floodplains and riverbeds should be on high alert should river levels rise, causing flooding of communities and settlements. This can ultimately lead to displacement or evacuation of such communities at short notice.
6. Danger to life: The public are strongly urged to refrain from crossing flooded streams or rivers by vehicle or on foot.



Moreover, the public are advised to be weather smart and to obey instructions of Disaster Management officials. The following guidelines can also assist the public to stay safe as illustrated in Figure 4:

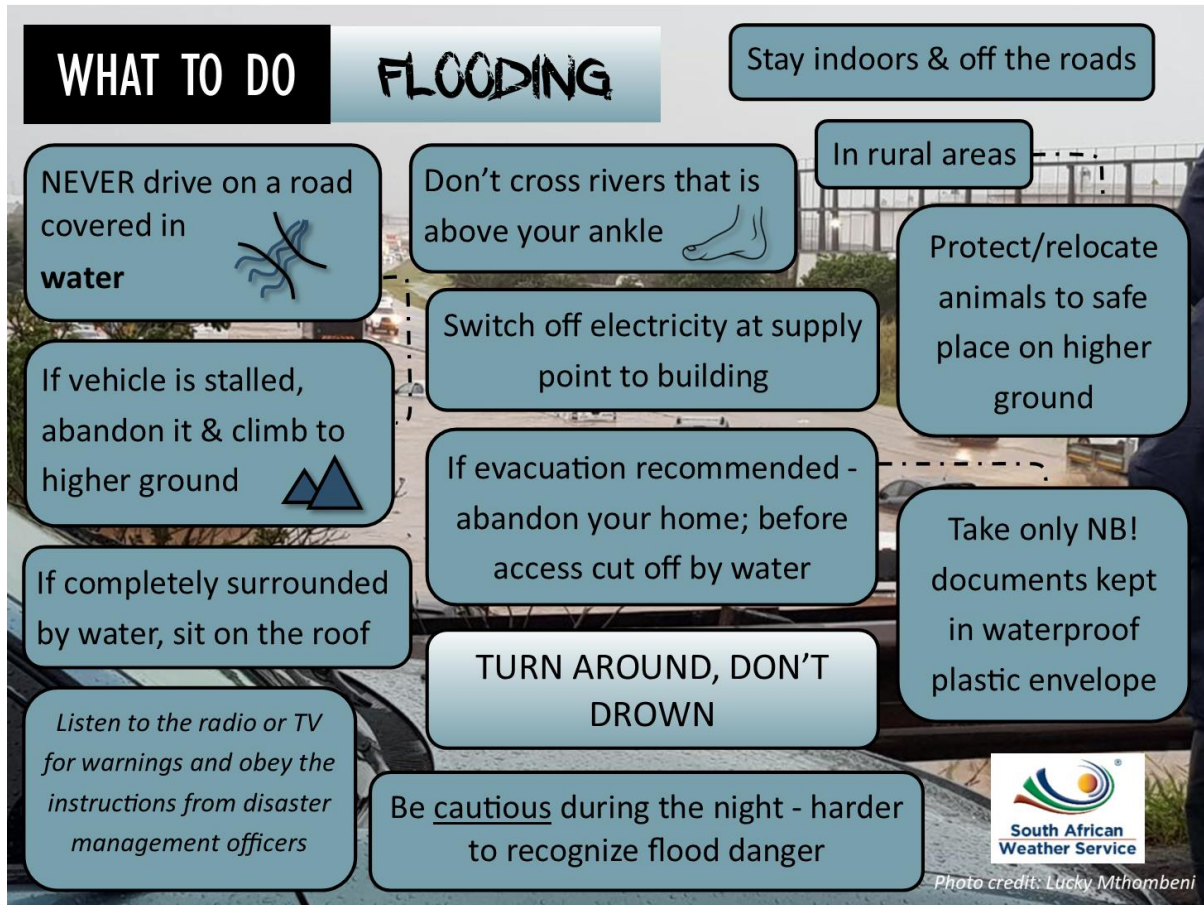


Figure 4: What to do during a flooding event. Source: SA Weather Service.

In light of the above, the South African Weather Service (SAWS) together with Disaster Management will monitor, inform and advise the media and the public in general regarding further weather developments in the coming days.

Please keep informed by following the South African Weather Service website [www.weathersa.co.za](http://www.weathersa.co.za) as well as the SAWS Facebook page (@WeatherServic) or Twitter @SAWeatherServic

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