

15 January 2026

Continued Heavy Rainfall Over Parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga: Flooding Risk Remains High

Due to the combination of very high amounts of rainfall already accumulated over the past several days, and the expectation of further heavy rainfall, the risk of widespread flooding remains critically high. As a result, the South African Weather Service (SAWS) has issued a **Red Level 10 Warning** for Disruptive Rainfall for areas most at risk.

Potential impacts include:

- **Danger to life due to fast-flowing rivers and streams**
- **Flooding of roads, bridges, and low-lying crossings**
- **Widespread damage to settlements, property, and critical infrastructure**
- **Displacement of communities and disruption to essential services**

This Red Level 10 Warning remains applicable while conditions continue to pose a severe risk to life, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

Forecast Rainfall (Next 24–48 Hours)

Forecast guidance indicates that further heavy rainfall of approximately 100 up to 200 mm is possible over parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, particularly affecting:

- Maruleng and Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipalities
- Nkomazi Local Municipality
- City of Mbombela
- Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
- Greater Giyani
- Greater Tzaneen
- Greater Letaba & Collins Chabane

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These additional rainfall amounts are expected to fall over already saturated catchments, which will exacerbate existing widespread flooding.

Outlook and Expected Improvement

Weather conditions are expected to gradually improve from around 19 January 2026, when only a 30% chance of showers and thundershowers is forecast over the affected areas. More stable conditions are expected from 20 January 2026 onwards, with minimal chances of further rainfall, allowing river levels and saturated soils to slowly recede.

Observed Rainfall (Past Few Days)

Rainfall accumulation maps for 11 to 12 January 2026 show widespread falls ranging from 10–50 mm, with higher accumulations of 50–100 mm and isolated areas of 100–200 mm over parts of eastern Limpopo and eastern Mpumalanga, including areas within Maruleng, Ba-Phalaborwa, Bushbuckridge, Nkomazi and the City of Mbombela.

The extended accumulation period for 11 to 13 January 2026 indicates a further increase in rainfall totals, with widespread accumulations exceeding 50 mm, and localised areas reaching between 100 and 200 mm, with isolated totals possibly higher over the far north-eastern parts of Limpopo. These accumulations confirm that persistent and repeated rainfall has occurred over the same areas, significantly increasing runoff and flooding potential.

Refer to Figure 1 and Figure 2: Observed rainfall accumulation maps for 11–12 and 11–13 January 2026

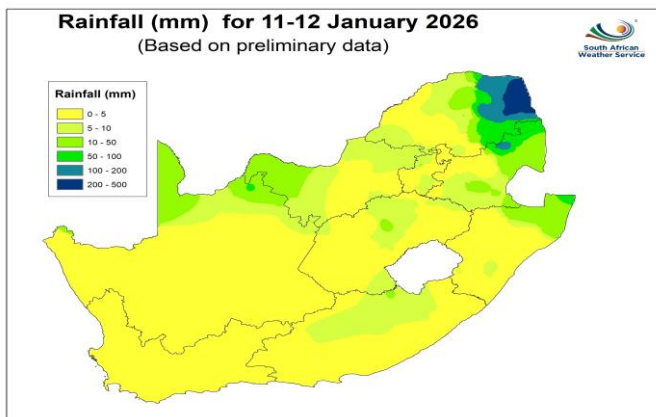


Figure 1: Observed rainfall accumulation map for 11 to 12 January 2026

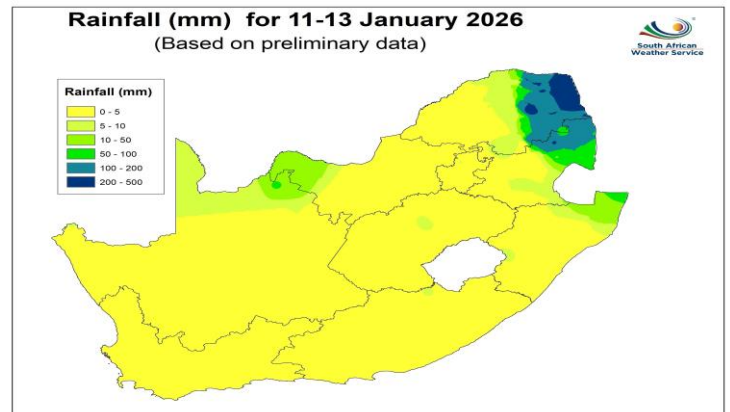


Figure 2: Observed rainfall accumulation for 11 to 13 January 2026

Safety Advisory

The SAWS urges residents in affected areas to:

- **Avoid crossing flooded roads, bridges, and rivers**
- **Move to higher ground if flooding occurs**
- **Follow instructions from local authorities and disaster management teams**
- **Monitor official SAWS weather updates and warnings**

The South African Weather Service will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation and provide updated forecasts and warnings as necessary.

Members of the public and stakeholders are strongly urged to continuously monitor official SAWS forecasts and warnings, as warnings will be updated as the likelihood and severity of impacts become clearer. The public is also advised to remain cautious of unauthorised or unverified information sources and refrain distributing such information further.

For regular updates, please visit <https://www.weathersa.co.za/> or follow SAWS' official media channels.

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