

Mercy Air, NDMA assess Cyclone Eloise damage

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MBABANE – Disaster assessment.

A Christian non-profit organisation based in South Africa, Mercy Air, yesterday joined the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and toured the four regions of the Kingdom of Eswatini. The exercise was done to assess damage caused by the recent Tropical Cyclone Eloise.

According to Jeremy Boddington, the Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Air, they jetted into the country in three helicopters to offer help as humanitarians. He said they heard about the cyclone that hit the country last Sunday and consulted NDMA on what they can do to assist the country.

“We have been flying around with NDMA to assess the damages and I think Eswatini got away luckily compared to Mozambique. However, we saw slight damages in bridges, washed away crops and pipelines that were damaged. I think it is not as bad as we had originally feared. NDMA seems to be very organised here and we have been impressed with the work they have been doing,” he said.

He said they hope to strengthen the relationship with the country, should there be a need for assistance in future.

Boddington said the organisation was based in White River.

DAMAGED

Meanwhile, Eric Seyama, Director of Early Warning and Research at NDMA, said the tour started at Big Bend, Lavumisa, Mankayane, Sicunusa, all the way to Matsamo. He said they noted during the tour that bridges had been damaged, especially low bridges.

“We will compile an assessment report so that we can calculate how the cyclone has affected the country economically. Once the report has been compiled, we would be able to know where to start with helping the affected areas,” he said.

Meanwhile, three journalists had the opportunity to fly with the team as it toured around Matsapha and Manzini. Notable, the team was able to also take visuals of dagga fields along the Lusushwana River.

ABOUT MERCY AIR

- Mercy Air is a Christian, non-profit organisation based in South Africa. It operates two fixed wing aircraft (Cessna 310 and a Quest Kodiak) and two Airbus AS350 helicopters.
- The organisation mentioned that it operates out of a 600m (2 000ft) airstrip near White River in the eastern part of South Africa.



JOB WELL DONE...Officers from NDMA and Mercy Air from Mozambique joined by members of Eswatini Umbutfo Defense Force yesterday after touring the country on three helicopters to assess the damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Eloise. (Pics: Mbongeni Ndelela)



This is how the bridge in the Lusushwana river in Matsapha looked like.



Tebetebe was not damaged at Mpuluzi.



One of the helicopters that was used to tour the country.



OVERFLOWING...The Lushwana river in Matsapha overflowing yesterday and this was the situation when officers from NDMA and journalists toured rivers to assess the damage caused by the recent tropical cyclone.

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