



A number of off-site depots and warehouses remain non-operational

Durban port operations resume with no damage to containers or vessels in port

The death toll from the KwaZulu-Natal floods has risen to over 340 and President Cyril Ramaphosa visited the area and surveyed the devastation from the air: bridges, roads and houses washed away along the KwaZulu-Natal coast – and the South African Weather Service has sent out another rain warning for this weekend.

Thousands of households have been left homeless by unprecedented rainfall.



Many Durban roads and bridges have been damaged by torrential rains (photo courtesy of the Government Communication and Information System)

Transnet is working around the clock to restore port operations, the state-owned company said yesterday afternoon, amongst them identifying alternatives to Bayhead Road, the notoriously congested access road to Durban's container terminal, which was extensively damaged by what the South African Weather Service refers to as "inclement weather".

Transnet notes that the port will continue to prioritize evacuation of essential goods, including food, medical supplies and petroleum products during this time.

Shipping resumed following the cleaning of debris from the harbour, and as at 14:00 on Thursday, 14 April, the Port of Durban had done 10 of the 11 planned vessel movements, Transnet says.

Reports of looting of warehouses

According to Maersk, whose Durban office is still closed, no infrastructure damage has been reported to vessels or containers within the container terminal and the pre-cool cold store was fully operational.

"Depots in the Durban area are slowly resuming, and we have reports of damages to containers here in third party depots. Some instances of looting have been reported, however, our containers in these facilities were all empties that had been positioned ready for export bookings, resulting in no impact to customer cargo," the Danish company says in a statement, adding that the Maersk-operated facility was operational with no damages to facility, machinery

or containers reported but that its warehouse facility had been impacted and remained non-operational.

The rail connection to the terminal remained suspended and all trucking fleets grounded.

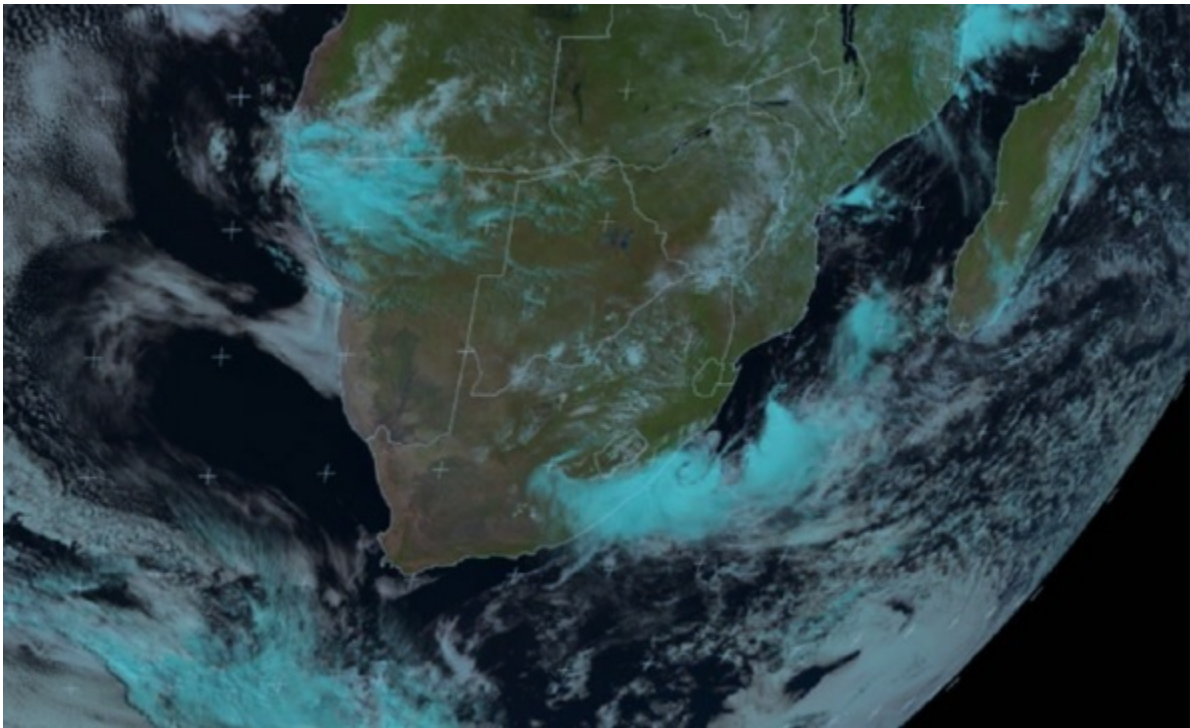
“Transnet, with the support of stakeholders, will continue to work around the clock to ensure that full operations resume as soon as is possible.



Subtropical Depression Issa

The KwaZulu-Natal coast recorded unprecedented rainfall over parts of the KwaZulu-Natal coast as a result of a cut-off low system (also responsible for the Demoina cyclone of 1984 in KwaZulu-Natal).

“For KwaZulu-Natal, however, the effect of the cut-off low system has been markedly enhanced by the presence of sustained low-level maritime air which has been fed in from the southern Indian ocean, thus driving the system to produce more rainfall. Moreover, the original source of the maritime air was from warmer, sub-tropical parts of the ocean,” the South African Weather Service explained earlier this week.



Satellite image on 12 April 2022, "clearly indicating the cyclonic swirl of deep convective cloud, associated with heavy rain, just off the southern coastline KwaZulu-Natal", according to the South African Weather Service (copyright: Eumetsat)

The low-pressure system has been classified as a subtropical depression and named Issa, a clockwise-moving system.

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