

Ramat Negev Special News letter

Floods in Ramat Negev

To our friends on the other side of the ocean, shalom:

Here is an update from Ramat HaNegev concerning the incredibly powerful rain storms that occurred in the Negev and the Arava.



Close to 1000 residents of the Nitzana region of Ramat HaNegev, from the communities of Nitzana, Kadesh Barnea, Azoz, Beer Milka and Kemehim were yesterday cut off from the rest of the country as a result of strong flash floods of a type that hasn't been seen in this area for decades. The powerful downpour of rain began Sunday evening and continued for 24 hours, during which there was approximately 70 mm of rain, more than half the yearly rainfall in this area. This strong downpour created powerful floods in all of the riverbeds in the area and caused the collapse of the Nitzana bridge, cutting the area off from the rest of the country as well as cutting off electricity and water to the area.

In a special operation yesterday, with the help of the army, the Regional Council succeeded in bringing a caravan of food and water to the residents by way of the border road. This morning, a second caravan came through with food and water and generators in order to supply electricity for vital needs.

Most of the damage caused by the powerful rains affected, as described above, the residents of the Nitzana area, but the massive downpour also created floods on all of the roads in the Ramat HaNegev region, blocking the entrances to almost all of the communities.



The Regional Council opened an emergency call center which worked continually, from the beginning of the rain storm, to provide support to all of the residents of the area. This included finding solutions for supplying food and water to the communities that were cut off, providing information with regard to roads that were blocked by floods, and even ordering

a helicopter to take a woman connected to a dialysis, with two small premature babies, to the center of the country for treatment because of the electricity blackout in her area.

Because of the rain storms, the children of Kadesh Barnea, Nitzana and Azuz cannot travel to their school. For the time being, the Regional Council has arranged special educational activities for these children in their communities.

This morning teams from the Electric Company, Mekorot: The National Water Company and the National Road Company went in to repair the damaged infrastructures in order to help return life to normal.

Also experts were brought in to evaluate the damage to agriculture and the infrastructures in the area, which is estimated to be in the millions of shekels.

We have gone through a very stormy experience but hope that the strong rains will bring many people from around the country to tour the area over the weekend and will also result in a beautiful blossoming. We hope that the influx of tourists, who will come to this area at the end of the week in order to witness the results of the rain storm, will help advance tourism in the area.

Sincerely yours

Shmuel Rifman

Mayor

For any comment feel free to contact Adva Lloyd, regional council spokesperson, at: adva@rng.org.il

