

Freak storm devastates Oshakati

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Stationary vehicles were damaged by flying objects or falling trees, while electricity poles were knocked down or tilted.

Walls were toppled and roofs were blown off business and residential buildings, as Oshakati was devastated by strong winds accompanied by a hailstorm late Monday afternoon.

Electricians of the Oshakati Premier Electric (OPE) had to spend the evening and the better part of Tuesday morning either restoring or replacing electricity poles damaged during the storm.

“A total of 17 poles were affected. Eleven poles were damaged and had to be replaced, while six were tilted and had to be restored,” said OPE electrician Oubaas Shikongo.

Oshana police spokesperson Warrant Officer Thomas Aiyambo said the storm caused widespread destruction, but no injuries were reported to the police.

Several residential and business buildings were severely damaged.

The roof of the Mbungu Lyetu complex was blown off and landed on the other side of the road, approximately 100 metres away.

The iron sheets blown off the Ekwafo Wood Work and the Ompumbu Bottle Store damaged several vehicles parked at the nearby Quick Repair Garage.

The owner of the garage Paulus Christian said the fact that no one was injured in his backyard garage was a miracle.

“All my kids were indoors, but one of my workers only escaped injury or death narrowly. He was running from the garage to seek shelter elsewhere when he encountered flying iron sheets. He was in danger of being

decapitated and had to dodge for all what he was worth. Some sheets missed him only narrowly,” Christian said.

Mateus Nekongo, an employee of the Ekwafo Wood Work said part of the roof was blown off and had flown as far away as the water canal, some 150 metres away.

“We recovered some of the badly damaged sheets near the canal this morning,” he said.

Elaborating on how everything happened, Nekongo said they were about to knock off at 17:00 when the storm began.

“The wind was so strong that we decided to stay at the premises and wait until it receded, but the massive dust eventually forced us to go indoors and closed the doors. It started raining and as we looking through the windows we were amazed by the hails all over the place, but our amazement quickly turned into a shock as we saw flying iron sheets. Part of the roof of the building we were in was gone,” Nekongo said.

He said there was one vehicle parked in the front of the building, but it survived the storm without a scratch.

At the Okandjengedi informal settlement, a stationary car was crushed by a falling branch.

OSHAKATI PLACIDO HILUKILWA