



News **UAE**

## Volunteers use dinghys to float supplies to Sharjah residents almost a week after floods

Pleas for food, drinking water, and medical care as elderly and patients are still in need



**Ramola Talwar Badam**  
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Six days after a [record-breaking storm](#) hit the UAE, volunteers could still be seen in [Sharjah](#) rowing inflatable boats and taking residents to safety

The dinghys were also used to transport essential supplies to neighbourhoods swamped by [flood](#) water that is taking almost a week to dissipate.

In response to the natural disaster, residents from [Dubai](#) and Sharjah set up WhatsApp groups, working with registered charities to help thousands of people whose homes are flooded.

“ I need formula milk and nappies. I’m still asking for help

**Aziza Hakeem, Sharjah resident**

Volunteers have been sending cooked rice, fruits, biryani, drinking water bottles and dry

rations to homes in need on boats and in 4×4 vehicles.

Residents have also set up a Google document *Rain Support UAE* that is being forwarded on WhatsApp groups with regular updates on roads that have opened and exits shut.

The document includes contacts of people with specific details about the assistance they need and phone numbers of volunteers in both Dubai and Sharjah.

Groups including the Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre, the Sri Lankan Welfare Association, the Indian People's Forum and several Filipino community groups have collected food and distributed supplies.

"Our volunteers went in boats in areas like Al Majaz where the situation is still terrible," said Ibrahim Khaleel, secretary of the Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre that has about 100 volunteers assisting people.

"The water is still deep and so we thought it best to take boats to reach people," he said.

"We fill the boats with water, cooked meals or labneh and fruit and use the boats to shift families and children to safety.

"Everyone is trying to do their best to help."

### **'We need formula and nappies'**

People stranded in buildings with elderly relatives and children continue to ask for food, drinking water and nappies as they cannot leave their homes.

Municipal authorities have been clearing [waterlogged cars](#) from roads and pumping water from submerged areas for the past five days across Dubai, Sharjah and Ajman.

But the UAE's worst floods on record continue to play havoc on people's lives.

While the murky water has been cleared in most areas of Dubai, efforts to empty water from Sharjah's Al Nahda, Al Qasimia, Abu Shagara and Al Majaz continue.

In many areas, filthy water is being drained out of basements where floodwater damaged electrical units and pumps.

Basit Mirza, a resident of Sharjah's Abu Shagara area, is worried about the health of his 65-year-old father, who has cancer.

The family cannot leave their eighth-floor apartment as it is risky to carry his father down the stairs and through the muddy water outside.

The taps are dry, lifts have not been working since Tuesday, but the family can cook simple food as electricity is available.



**'We need help'**

Mr Mirza and his brothers carry gallons of drinking water bought from stores nearby up the stairs.

They also fill plastic bottles with tap water from a relative's home nearby and carry this up flights of stairs for use in the toilets and for cooking.

"It's very tough. People are still suffering a lot," said the 28-year-old Pakistani who works in sales.

"My father is a cancer patient and we want to take him to the hospital but he needs a wheelchair.

"It's still too dangerous for him outside."

Mr Mirza said it would take a few more days to get the water out of the flooded seven-metre high basement.

"We just want this water to be taken out and for the lifts to work," he said.

"It is a headache to carry gallons of tap water and drinking water up the stairs but somehow we are managing because our family needs it.

"We are not flushing, we cannot bathe, it's the same for so many people. We need help."

Fellow Sharjah resident Raed has only been able to check on his 70-year-old mother by phone as the waters have not receded in the Al Qasimia area, where she lives.

"I'm worried about my mother and I hope other people's parents are okay," said Raed, who is from Lebanon.

"My mother cannot use the stairs and is alone with the housemaid. She is trying to wait it out.

"We thought it would get easy after the rain stopped but there is still water outside.

"The authorities are trying their best to take out the water but this is a problem nobody imagined could happen.

"We are hoping there is no medical issue with my mother as we cannot get her down the stairs."

### **Desperate need for baby food**

Some fled their homes when flood waters rose but are still worried about the [damage](#).

Aziza Hakeem left the family villa in the Al Sabkha area when the water gushed in the day after the rains on April 17.

"I have asked for help on WhatsApp groups and we have got food for ourselves," said the 35-year-old who has a one-year-old and a two-month old baby.

"But I need formula milk and nappies. I'm still asking for help.

"People are doing as much as they can, and I desperately need baby food."

Friends have given the family shelter but Ms Hakeem knows they must also soon deal with the destruction caused by the floods.

Her husband has attempted to check on their home but stretches of the Al Sabkha neighbourhood have been blocked for safety.

"We live in the middle area and the entire place is flooded," said the Pakistani resident.

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"When we left, the water was chest high and we realised we must run away.

"I could see the fridge and washing machine floating, my furniture, medicines all gone.

"Now I just want my children safe so I don't want to think about all this.

"It's not just our house, it's all houses in our neighbourhood."

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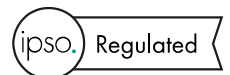
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