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## Probe to begin on Saturday

Hassna'a Mokhtar | Arab News

JEDDAH: Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah ordered an inquiry into the causes of the Nov. 25 flash flooding in Jeddah. The commission in charge is set to begin its investigation on Saturday.

Following the announcement of the investigation, the municipality denied rumors that many of its employees are banned from traveling outside the Kingdom.

"It is absolutely not true," Jeddah municipality spokesman Ahmed Al-Ghamdi told Arab News.

Unconfirmed reports by different media sources were cited on Tuesday saying that 70 percent of the municipality's employees were banned from traveling outside Saudi Arabia.

One of the rumors said that Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport has a list with the names of people banned from traveling.

"This includes names of workers in the Jeddah municipality, other branches of the municipality, drainage system and some other construction companies," said one report on the online Arabic-language forum alrassxp.com.

Al-Ghamdi also commented on other reports claiming that ongoing projects of the municipality have been suspended until the investigation is over.

"Our main concern now is to fix the damage caused by the rain," he said. "Other projects were not stopped."

The municipality is working closely with the Civil Defense and local authorities to clear the affected areas. The flooding left more than 100 people dead and between 7,000 and 10,000 cars destroyed or damaged. More bodies are expected to be recovered as cleanup efforts continue with rescue and recovery teams assisted by helicopters.

Jeddah Gov. Prince Mishaal ibn Majed had expressed at a press conference on Monday his readiness to appear before the committee to provide it with all the information he has about the causes of the tragedy.

"I am quite willing to appear before the committee if I am summoned," he said.

Prince Mishaal said "the situation needs thorough assessment."

He was confident that the committee would put its hand on the wound and would radically correct things to prevent a recurrence of the situation.

The Jeddah municipality has formed three working groups and each is headed by a head of a municipal quarter. They are Um Al-Salam, Al-Jamaa, and the southern area.

The aim is to evaluate the losses resulting from the flooding. The

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municipal heads are also asked to cooperate w ith the Friends of Jeddah, a volunteer group, w hich is under the supervision of the Jeddah municipality.

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