



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAJOR FLOODING AT SOUTHERN TOWERS LEAVES UNINHABITABLE  
AND TENANTS WITH NOWHERE TO SLEEP**

**ALEXANDRIA, V.A.** On Saturday, October 14, 2023, between 11:00 pm and 1:00 am, tenants of Southern Towers observed leaking from their A/C units and floorboards and immediately attempted to reach the building’s maintenance and management team. By Sunday afternoon into the evening, tenants reported [major flooding](#) starting from the 8th floor of the complex’s Sherwood building. Approximately 14 units spanning the 1st through 8th floors now have significant damage, including [warped flooring](#), lost electricity, and damaged walls. Many of the apartments are uninhabitable as a result, with some experiencing approximately 1-2 inches of standing water and [water pouring into the hallways](#). Tenants had made multiple attempts to reach landlord CIM Group’s emergency maintenance line and management staff over the course of the day, but were met with either silence, lack of information and/or dismissal. Despite requests from the tenants, management refused to come to the property to provide assistance. On October 16, 2023, CIM had sent only one official email to tenants about the flood around 8am. Tenants did not hear back from CIM regarding their housing until approximately 5:24pm. City of Alexandria officials were informed of the flooding and were present on the property as well.

Tenants gathered in the lobby of the building, at a loss of what to do, sharing fears of having nowhere to go and damage to their personal property. One tenant shared “We can’t sleep in this. It’s not safe and the smell is unbearable.” Among the impacted tenants include several families with pre-existing health issues, one who is bedridden and many families with young children.

Tenants have been reporting issues with their A/C units since the start of the summer. It is in these A/C units that many have observed growing mold, a health concern that many fear will be exacerbated by the flood. In a recent [letter](#) to CIM Group management, Alexandria City Councilmember Alyia Gaskins shared her own experience visiting a unit that had mold just a few weeks ago and upon entering the unit, her youngest child immediately began coughing so much that they had to leave the unit.

“This situation is entirely unacceptable, inhumane, and yet another example of how the CIM Group does not care about the best interests of these tenants and is not truly committed to providing them with safe and habitable conditions,” **said Sosseh Prom, Housing Justice Director at African Communities Together.** “Why was no one from management immediately on the property as soon as they heard about the severe flooding? Why were previous complaints from tenants about the ACs ignored or improperly



resolved? These residents deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion. How many more of these catastrophes do our community members need to go through?"

National immigrant advocacy group, [African Communities Together](#), issued an e-mail to CIM Group management on behalf of the affected tenants Monday afternoon, outlining tenant demands following the flooding at the Sherwood building. The demands read as follows:

- Immediately relocate tenants to habitable units on the property. At a minimum, tenants must be moved into units that are comparable. If tenants are moved into bigger or renovated units (when they previously were in smaller or unrenovated units), tenants should not be charged higher rent or higher utility bills.
- Residents who had to move into a hotel, Air BnB, or other lodging to escape the flooding should be fully reimbursed by CIM.
- Rent for the month of November should be waived for all affected tenants to accommodate the financial impact of the flooding.
- Water and electricity bills should be totally comped in next month's utility bill for all tenants to accommodate the instability in charges brought on by the flooding.
- Management must be transparent with the tenants at all stages of this process. Tenants must be given consistent and clear notice about: what caused the problem; what CIM is doing to fix it; how long repairs will take; and any other relevant updates. "Consistent and clear" notice shall also include translated messages for tenants in need.

This is not the first flooding incident. Earlier this fall, tenants reported flooding during a recent visit from Alexandria City Officials, with water pouring through the [elevator shafts](#).

Tenants are still waiting for a detailed and adequate response from CIM Group.

***African Communities Together (ACT)** is a national nonprofit dedicated towards improving the lives of African immigrants in the United States, and empowers African immigrants to integrate socially, advance economically and engage civically.*