

Hostel residents 'living in fear'

'THERE'S A LOW-KEY POLITICAL WAR HERE'

Siviwe Feketha

RESIDENTS of Durban's volatile Kwa-Mashu hostel say they live in constant fear of being killed in what is believed to be a low-key political war.

Even more worrying, say residents who do not want to be identified, is that police have failed to make arrests in some of the more than 20 killings during this year alone.

The hostel, unlike the eight other hostels in Durban, is a squalid, overcrowded facility whose conditions are made worse by shacks built between the hostel blocks.

"You sleep today and in the morning, you wake up with a shack next to your room," said a resident.

"You don't know who is staying there or where they come from. Some of us are concerned because we have children," she said.



WAR ZONE: eThekweni mayor James Nxumalo visits KwaMashu hostel where incidents of political violence have flared

PHOTO: TEBOGO LETSIE

Residents say they cannot live elsewhere as they cannot afford rent.

Following the killing of

four ANC members at the hostel on November 7, the ANC's KwaZulu-Natal deputy chairman Willie Mchunu

has blamed opposition parties.

Sphamandla Mpungose, Sizwe Shandu, Lucky Sibiyi and Sibongiseni Biyela were shot dead at the hostel in a suspected political hit. They were said to have defected from the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

"ANC members are not the problem here, they are the ones who are targeted," Mchunu said during a visit to the hostel recently.

Mchunu who is also MEC for community safety, visited the hostel to assure residents that arrests into the murders would follow.

The hostel rooms are inhabited by one up to eight people. The tenants say they pay between R46 and R600 per month.

Last Thursday the ANC eThekweni region held a joint memorial service for the dead members ahead of their burial.

Although Mchunu did not

name individual parties, he said the ANC has always been targeted. But IFP provincial chairman Blessed Gwala hit back.

"The ANC has dismally failed as the government to put the real hostel issue to rest. It has failed to change

the hostels into family units and reduce crime.

Why would we kill people for defecting from us? We also have many members who defected from the ANC and other parties," said Gwala.

Ubunye bamaHostela – an association formed by hostel residents – blames both the governing party and the opposition for the killings.

Chairman Vusi Zweli said hostel residents were used as tools by political leaders.

"We formed this association so that people could be united on the basis of their common needs and not be divided according to their political affiliations," he said.

Political violence in KwaZulu-Natal hostels dates back to pre-1994 when most

hostels were divided between the ANC and IFP.

Zweli said political parties were fueling tensions among

hostel dwellers, who he said were mostly not "well educated. We are trying to educate them here but it is going to take time," Zweli said.

The ANC's call for cameras in the hostels has been rejected by some hostel residents, saying they had not stopped crime in the Durban central business district.

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“You sleep today and in the morning, you wake up with a shack next to your room”

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS: NOTIFICATION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED RUSTENBURG STRENGTHENING PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF ±2 KM 400KV LOOP IN LOOP OUT POWER LINE AND 400/132KV MARANG B SUBSTATION WITHIN RUSTENBURG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF BOJANALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Notice is given in terms of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice R543 Chapter 6, Regulation 54, sub-regulation 2(c) i of intent by ESKOM Holdings SOC (Ltd) to strengthen the Rustenburg network by constructing and operating the following infrastructure:

- A new 3x 500MVA 400/132kV Main Transmission Substation (MTS), Marang B on approximately ±30 hectares;
- ±2km 400kV loop-in-loop-out power line from the existing Bighorn-Marang/Medupi-Marang 400 kV power lines.

LOCATION

The proposed project will be in close proximity to the existing 400/88kV Marang Main Transmission substation on Farm Klippgat 281 JQ and Portion 2 of the Farm Elandsheuevel 282 JQ, located approximately 14 km North East of Rustenburg.

EIA PROCESS

The development is listed in terms of Government Notice R545 and Government Notice R546, Listing Notice 2 and 3 under Chapter 5 of the National Environment Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), and therefore requires a Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken. The project will trigger listed activities No. 8 and 15 of Government Notice R545 and activity 4c (ee) of Government R546 which state that:

GN R.545 Activity 8: The construction of infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity with a capacity of 275 kilovolts or more, outside an urban area or industrial complex;

GN R545 Activity 15: Physical alteration of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land or residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use where the total area to be transformed is 20 hectares or more; and

GN R546 Activity 4c i (ee): The construction of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5metres in North West in critical biodiversity areas (Terrestrial Type 1 and 2 and Aquatic Type 1) as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans

An application to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment Process has been lodged with the Department of Environmental Affairs and was assigned **DEA Reference No:** 14/12/16/3/3/2/611.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report has been prepared by DIGES and is now available for public review from the **19th of November 2014 to the 19th of January 2015**. The report will be available at the following locations:

- DIGES, Suite 2, 546, 16th Road, Midrand. Contact Person: Brenda Makanza;
- Reception Desk at Rustenburg Public Library, Heystek Street, Rustenburg;
- Boitekong Community Library in Boitekong Township. Contact Person: The Librarian;
- Reception Desk at Tsholofelo College in Boitekong Township, North West;
- Reception Desk at Mfidikwe Primary School in Mfidikwe Village, North West;
- Reception Desk at Thlage Primary School in Thekwana Village, North West Province;
- Reception Desk at Photsaneng Primary School in Photsaneng Village, North West Province.

You are invited to submit your written comments/objections to the Environmental Assessment Practitioner mentioned below:

Environmental Assessment Practitioner

Ms. Brenda Makanza
Dynamic Integrated Geo-Environmental Services (DIGES)
Fax: 011 312 7824
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This advert is prepared on behalf of Eskom Holdings SOC Limited

Protesters demand councillor's resignation

Chris Makhaye

CHAOS reigned in KwaNdengezi township, west of Durban, yesterday as hundreds of protesting residents barricaded roads with burning tyres and other debris.

Police had their hands full trying to open access roads leading to the township.

At least one man was arrested and was expected to appear in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court on charges of public violence.

Protesters were demanding that the government provide them with low-cost houses and called for the resignation of the local councillor Mduzuzi Ngcobo.

They accused him of nepotism, corruption, intimidation and of being hugely responsible for the death of community activists, who are critical of his leadership style.

Yesterday's protests came just days after the funeral of Mobeni Khwela, a community activist who was shot dead two weeks ago.

KwaZulu-Natal police spokesman Thulani Zwane said the situation was

under control.

KwaNdengezi has been on a knife-edge for the past seven weeks.

It all began in early October when Thuli Ndlovu, an Abahlali baseMjondolo branch chairperson, was murdered at her home in KwaNdengezi.

She was critical of Ngcobo's leadership in the township and Ndlovu's supporters blamed the councillor for her death.

Three weeks ago angry community members burnt down three municipal vehicles and ransacked Ngcobo's constituency office. Last week Ngcobo said he and his family members had been threatened.

Sizwe Dlamini at yesterday's protest said: "We will never stop until this councillor is gone. We even told the ANC leaders during the funeral [of Khwela] on Saturday that we don't want him [Ngcobo]. We are tired of him because he is allocating jobs to his pals and RDP houses are sold by his close associates."

Ngcobo was not available for comment yesterday afternoon.

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