SQUATTERS - T.V.L.

1996 - 1997
Rates shock for Soweto squatters

Upset informal housing residents do not understand what they'll pay for

By Joshua Rabaroro

Residents of informal settlements in and around Soweto were shocked to learn that they are now expected to pay the same rates as homeowners in the townships.

The same shock awaits their counterparts elsewhere in the country, who will be expected to pay rates for the first time in terms of the Local Authorities Bill expected to be tabled by the Cabinet next week.

Millions of township home owners throughout the country will have to pay more in rates when the Bill becomes law later this year.

Squatters living in areas under the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council will have to pay about R21.50 for rates as from July 1.

The TMC recently approved the assessment rates and residents living in squatter camps in and around Soweto are also expected to pay rates according to the size of their sites.

According to statistics compiled by the council, more than 100,000 people live in informal settlements in Soweto, Dube, Dobsonville, Alexandra Township and surrounding areas.

Sites in informal settlements have been valued by the TMC for rate charges.

The council has begun the process of engineering squatters on the valuation roll.

Mr Bob Matthews of Soweto's Fed Clerk square camp said he and other residents were unsure that they were expected to pay rates.

"Some councillors have informed us that we should support the MabSharp campaign by paying for services as announced by President Mandela. They promised to come back to us with more information, but have not done so."

"We are shocked that we have to pay rates. What is that, and why should we pay for facilities we do not have?" Residents said they did not have proper roads, street lights, sewerage, water or "sports fields, halls, parks and libraries that are available to us."

Mrs Naomi Motloueng said the conditions at the Fed Clerk settlement were deplorable.

She said they had tried in vain to summon councillors to explain to the people why they were not getting facilities.

What rates are all about

By Joshua Rabaroro

Rates are levied charged on the value of property and land owned by residents and local authorities.

Monthly assessment rates are based on the value of property as reflected in the valuation roll.

The new valuation roll in Greater Johannesburg came into effect on July 1. Property owners can object if they do not agree with the value of their property as recorded on the valuation roll.

How the council determines this:

According to the valuation roll the value of a rand ordinary matchesite site is R10,000.

The council charges 0.45% for every R1 in the total of the property. The value of the property (R10,000) is multiplied by 0.45%, which gives total of R45.

The total (R45) is then divided by 12 months, giving R3.75. The council then deducts a 40 cent rebate from the figure (R3.75) and the remaining 40 percent (R2.10) is then payable monthly by residents.

This figure will appear in bills next month.

In addition, residents will also pay for water, sewerage, and refuse removal.

Electricity bills are in some cases paid directly to Eskom, but for those residents who get their supply from the council, the rates will be reflected on their monthly bills.

The survey generated by means of assessment rates is used to provide services such as roads, parks, libraries, halls and street lights.

Residents of Greater Johannesburg have until August 26 to inspect the new valuation rolls of the suburb councillors.

Forms are available at: Eastern Metropolitan Subcouncil, Sandton Civic Centre, Alexandra Civic Centre, Metropolitan Centre, Bramfomien; Telephone 881-6075 or 407-0863;

Northern MSS, Randburg Civic Centre, 1425A, Sondela Street, Orlando; Telephone 2759 2580 or 407-0863;

Western MSS, Red Airport Civic Centre, Dobsonville Civic Centre, Metropolitan Centre, Bramfomien, Telephone 766-2166 or 407-0863;

Southern MSS, Morn Centre, Bramfomien, Jebbini Centre, Soweto, Langa Centre, Esokale Centre, Tel 886-6063 or 407-0863.

Jo’burg residents have to pay up

By Joshua Rabaroro

HUNDREDS of thousands of Greater Johannesburg residents - black and white - are to pay the same assessment rates based on new valuation rolls and increased water and sewerage tariffs this month.

The shock tariff increases for many were announced by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council amid protests from the civic organisations and concerned residents.

The TMC has approved a assessment rate of 64.5c for every rand in the rand value of a property. It water tariff increase of 20 percent and a sewerage charge hike of 40 percent.

The TMC has become the first metropolitan in South Africa to introduce uniform valuation rolls (assessment rates) that cut across previous apartheid-era boundaries.

It has been equipped with the basis for achieving equity in property taxation after uniform rolls have been completed for all four metropolitan boroughs which include Soweto, Dobsonville, Dube, and Alexandra.

The main black residential areas and others to the south of Johannesburg have been valued for rating purposes for the first time.

Assessment rates as a form of local taxation are levied on the value of a site as reflected on a valuation roll.

These rolls are compiled lists of taxable property of all suburbanites within Greater Johannesburg and their value, which reflects the market value of these properties on a valuation roll.

Three valuation rolls will include some 200,000 to 240,000 properties that have not been valued for rating purposes.

This means nearly 200,000 properties within the areas covered. Previously valuation departments existed only in Johannesburg, Randburg and Sandton.

This year private valuers were responsible for the valuation of Randburg, and east and west Rand.

Councillor Eugene Robbon says assessment rates have important part of the council’s income. Certain services, such as electricity, water, transport, are classified as non-revenue services and the unduly principle is that the users should pay for them.

There are, however, also certain services which are available to all, where no charges are raised for the use, such as libraries, parks, sports fields and roads.

People living in "matchbox" houses such as these in Soweto will soon be paying monthly rates like those paid in the former "white" suburbs of Johannesburg.
Big anti-squatter demo causes traffic snarl-up

Chaos erupted in Naturena in the south of Johannesburg this morning when residents, angered at the pending moving of squatters into the area, barricaded all exits out of the area, causing major traffic snarl-ups.

Residents started barricading roads with private cars at about 4.30am and later matched graders and a bus to block off all exits.

Numbers swelled to several hundred when people on their way to work stopped to join the protest. Other motorists, trying to leave the area, drove around searching for sand roads leading to the freeway.

Police Casspins were brought in to tow away vehicles, shortly after 8am, when the situation was described by people on the scene as “becoming tense”. Army vehicles were expected to be brought in to help with the towing.

Naturena residents are angry at the Southern Johannesburg Metropolitan Sub-Structure’s plan to move squatters into the area from the Thembalihle Squatter Camp, near Lenasia.

Chris Ngobeni, chief executive officer of the SMSS, who was on the scene, said a tribunal would be held in Braamfontein today and residents “were welcome to come and air their grievances.”

A final decision on the relocation of the squatters would be taken tonight, he said.
Sexwale rounds off Natuna protests

Citing Premier says the poor are being punished for being destitute

Photo: reef.com
Sexwale will not abandon squatters

Nomavengda Mathiane

GAUTENG premier Tokyo Sexwale promised Tembathile squatter camp residents yesterday that he would not abandon them just because they were poor.

He said that by staying in Houghton he had become a symbol for the poor, showing that they too could live there some day.

Sexwale told more than 2 000 residents of Tembathile — which is adjacent to Lenasia — that he was born at Shantyville, a squatter camp in Orlando, and was in Tembathile to stop residents marching to Naturena.

Accompanied by Johannesburg mayor Irene Mnguni, members of the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council and southern substructure councillors, Sexwale received a tumultuous welcome and led the crowd in singing freedom songs.

While he would not say when houses would be built for Tembathile residents, he spent the greater part of his speech denigrating Naturena residents, saying it was shameful that they had not tackled the previous government.

Residents carried placards bearing messages about housing, among them one that read: "Beware Watkins of your actions."

Sylvia Watkins, a Naturena task team member, spoke out on television on Monday against the building of low cost-housing in Naturena.
Midrand threatens legal action over erection of homes for 2 000 squatters

Midrand residents and businesses are threatening protest and legal action against the Khayalami Metro Council, formerly the North East Rand Metro Council, to prevent the erection of structures for almost 2 000 families at an informal settlement there.

Businesses are irate about the proposed settlement which is to happen in Commerce, an area zoned as industrial. The land was expropriated from local business by the council in May for the purpose of low-cost housing.

At the council meeting last week, Community Action Party councillor Finnie Janse van Rensburg accused the Khayalami council of failing to involve the Midrand council from the beginning of the process. She challenged the legality of the Khayalani Metro Council expropriating land, arguing that the local government ordinance did not grant metro councils such powers.

"The council should not ignore the fact that businesses and residents in the area have invested hundreds of thousands of rands in their properties, and any low-cost development, unless well planned, would negatively affect them."

Charles Muller of the President Park Residents' Association said residents believed proper low-cost housing had to be established because the proposed informal settlement would be bordering two affluent areas in which properties were valued at around R300 000. Residents feared these would lose half their value if the shacks went up. — City Desk.
Orange Farm sitting on a time bomb
Subsidy to house Jo'burg vagrants in the balance

BY KARIN SCHMID

The fate of about 6 000 vagrants in Johannesburg hangs in the balance because housing subsidies may not fall within the ambit of the National Housing Board's subsidy scheme.

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council, with the Gauteng housing department and several non-governmental welfare organisations, last year began work on a R51-million programme to purchase and renovate buildings in central Johannesburg to house the vagrants in the next three years.

However, Lindsay Brenner, who chairs the council's housing, urbanisation and environmental committee, said yesterday that housing officials and councillors were concerned about news that the National Housing Board may refuse a proposed subsidy of R17-million a year over three years.

"Earlier this year the provincial housing department and the provincial housing board approved finance for capital costs. The council would pay running and maintenance costs, and welfare organisations would manage the shelters. But because of the nature of the national housing subsidy programme, and despite the province's agreement, through technicalities the National Housing Board will now have difficulty funding us," Brenner said.

She said it appeared that the subsidy was being refused "based on the premise that the housing of homeless people should be undertaken by the Department of Welfare". Welfare did not, however, have a budget for the capital costs of purchasing and refurbishing buildings and had no programme for the housing of the city's adult homeless population, Brenner added.

Nine projects in central Johannesburg and one in Rosebank are now in various stages of renovation, but may have to be put on hold until financing is finalised.

The shelters are to be refurbished to provide sleeping units, lock-up facilities, and communal ablution and cooking facilities.

People are to be housed temporarily until they can move on to more permanent accommodation.
Town council up in arms over squatter relocation

BY FIKILE-NTSISHELE MOYA

The decision of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMCo to resettle squatters from Dlamini, Soweto, to a low-cost development project on the outskirts of Alberton is set to become a serious source of conflict between the squatters and Alberton residents.

The Alberton Town Council and several ratepayers' associations have raised strong objections to the decision, which took the TMCo's town-planning tribunal about 10 minutes to make yesterday.

The decision came after a day-long debate between the squatters, Alberton residents, town planners and consulting engineers.

The squatters left the meeting yesterday chanting with joy. However, the Alberton Town Council and its ratepayers, were incensed.

The council's grievances included lack of consultation in the planning process, land of infrastructure, the size of the houses, concern about security and the residents' belief that squatters would be unable to maintain their houses.

Peter Dixon, a town council representative, said the council wanted to be part of the planning and would not comment on or object to issues that had already been raised.

He said the council had to be regarded as an important roleplayer because the Liesde en Vrede low-cost housing project would border on Alberton.

A ratepayers' association, the New South Community Forum (NSCF), threatened to walk out of the meeting, claiming that the chairman, Norman Prince, had prejudiced the hearing by publicly stating his support for the resettlement.

The NSCF's Derek Skinner said the association decided against the walkout because the

Chairman 'prejudiced hearing'

chairman would have gone on without them.

Bruno Happe, the chairman of the United Ratepayers' Action Group, said their objections were meant to help the squatters who, were it not for the ratepayers, would be getting "far less than they will get now".

She raised doubts over the ability of the Dlamini community to pay for services, like electricity and refuse removal, because "most of them are single parents".

The town planning spokesman, Bruce Nicholson, said the exact size of the houses was still to be "workshopped" with the new residents.

The town planners said money had already been provided for the scheme. However, the Gauteng education department did not have the money to build schools this year.

A recent decision by the Gauteng government to resettle squatters from Thembalihle to Mogudi provoked protests from Naturena residents who marched on Premier Tokyo Sexwale's home to vent their anger.

Prince said the Liesde en Vrede decision could form the basis of the TMCo's approach to the Naturena project.
ANC proposal for squatters

The Centurion, Gauteng, branch of the ANC has recommended that three reception areas be established in the area to accommodate about 1,000 squatters from Knoppieslaagte informal settlement until the council identifies and develops land for them.

Addressing a press conference, branch chairman Moses Tsajwa said yesterday the families in the area were living in fear because the land they had occupied did not belong to the council and residents had been attacked by armed individuals earlier this month.

He said the Ward 10 Ratepayers' Association had nothing to fear because the council was planning to keep the families on these temporary sites for a period not longer than two years. The reason the people were not allocated a permanent site yet was because the council wanted to install basic infrastructure and to encourage appropriate housing developments to fit in with the environment.

He said it was wrong to see these reception areas as concentration camps. Before people were moved, temporary measures would be taken to provide water, sanitation, lights and security to guard against a potential influx, he said. – City Reporter.
Hostel dwellers kill 8 squatters

By Gay Oliver

Johannesburg – About 500 mine hostel dwellers yesterday attacked the settlement of Springvale Farm near Stillfontein, killing eight people and injuring eight more as clashes intensified near the Anglovold-owned Hartebeesfontein mine and Randgold-owned Buffelsfontein mine, police said yesterday.

At least 18 people have been killed since Sunday morning when a series of explosions ripped through the settlement.

The shackland bombs were manufactured using commercial explosives, commonly found on mines, senior superintendent Pieter du Plessis, the police spokesman for North West province, said yesterday.

As residents ran from the blasts, they were stabbed or slashed to death by their attackers and others were wounded by shrapnel. Ten people were killed and 14 critically injured in the first wave of violence.

Mboweni, the labour minister, visited the scene yesterday.

The latest mine-related violence will not fall under the ambit of a commission of inquiry established to investigate mine violence on the Gold Fields'-owned mines of East Driefontein, Northam and Letsohoma which has claimed the lives of at least 35 miners since July.

"The facts are completely different... the issues are complex and not related," Mboweni said after his visit.

The commission is chaired by John Myburgh, the Judge President of the Labour Appeal Court.

The Gold Fields mine violence has been attributed to, among other things, rivalry between the ANC-aligned National Union of Mineworkers and the Inkatha Freedom Party-linked United Workers Union of South Africa.

Du Plessis said the root cause of the violence at Springvale appeared to be a "friction" between Pondo- and Sotho-speaking mineworkers, but "this is still to be established".

Mboweni said such explanations were "superficial".

Yesterday’s violence began in the morning when Buffelsfontein pioneer hostel dwellers descended on the settlement, about 1km away, armed with knobkerries, knives and stones, Du Plessis said.

The settlement residents lease the land from three white farmers.

The hostel, leased by Buffelsfontein mine, accommodates about 3,000 workers.

About half are employees of the Anglo American wholly owned subsidiary Shaft Sickers.

The company specialises in sinking mine shafts.

A Randgold spokesman said production at Buffelsfontein was not affected, but the violence was a cause for concern. Production continued as normal at the Hartebeesfontein mine.

About 86 policemen were placed on the road between the hostel and the settlement and about 100 soldiers were scheduled to be deployed last night to bolster the security in the area, Du Plessis said.
Reprieve for Auckland Park squatters

BY ANNA COX

About 40 squatters who illegally invaded a piece of council-owned land in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, have been granted until tomorrow morning to move.

In the meantime, the Northern Metro Council has undertaken to try to find alternative accommodation for the people.

The council served an eviction order last week within four hours of the squatters taking occupation of the land, giving them until yesterday to leave the site.

A private security company hired by the council to carry out the evictions, arrived on site yesterday.

The squatters, however, appealed to officials for time to find alternative accommodation.

Last-minute negotiations between the squatters, NP councillor for the area Pieter Andrade, residents of the area and ANC councillor Fathiel Moosa resulted in a 48-hour reprieve.

The squatters claim that they relocated from Melville Koppies and the Faam Smit Park in Auckland Park where they had been harassed by police.

Andrade said although the council had acted within the law and could have evicted the squatters, it had agreed to give them a further 48 hours on humanitarian grounds.

"The council has assured us that every effort will be made to find them alternative accommodation," he said.

The site was prime land valued at R15-million and was ready for development, Andrade said.

He added that immediate action had to be taken to prevent a huge illegal invasion by other homeless people.
When night falls at Turkish Baths - a shelter for about 250 homeless families - friends become foes, neighbours turn into strangers, and women and children become victims of rape and abuse.

Only in February, the residents officially renamed this place Ntle Ya Mohau, meaning a "house of mercy". Now residents call it a "hellhole".

The white building at the corner of Nugget and De Villiers streets in downtown Johannesburg became a haven in January to a group of homeless people who two years ago had invaded the Red Cross building a few blocks away.

Their relocation came after the Johannesburg Housing Trust for the Homeless (JTH) decided to make them the first beneficiaries of a housing project. In this project, JTH planned to convert unused industrial buildings into transitional homes.

The families at Turkish Baths were supposed to be an example of how homelessness, affecting about 8,000 people in the inner city, could be addressed.

Before they moved into their new home, the walls were repainted, damaged toilets and sewerage pipes were fixed, and there was electricity - conditions better than the dark and derelict Red Cross building. The upgrading was funded by the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council which paid R200,000 to revamp the vacate building owned by the Public Works Department.

Despite JTH's good intentions, life has been merciless in this overcrowded shelter which lacks privacy and is divided by cardboard boxes, sheets of cloth and corrugation.

"We are breeding a generation of thugs and futureless citizens," says resident Betty Tshabalala.

She refers to the project as "a plan that has gone terribly wrong". Most people are unemployed, shebeens have sprung up in every corner and most children do not attend school.

At night children and women jump at every sound as they are targets of rapists and molesters. "Most people are always drunk and troublesome. Theft is another big problem - you can not leave your food on the table." But even worse, someone was killed last month, someone was stabbed, and this week a woman was raped, she adds.

Residents say current living conditions do not tally with what they were promised when they moved in. They expected to have security and identity cards to prevent overcrowding. JTH also promised them training on various jobs skills such as plumbing and primary child care.

"Everything is breaking up. We are sleeping in corridors, some in toilets," one resident says.

Walking around the building, one is buried in a strong musty smell and loud music. The floors are dirty and toilets blocked. JTH co-ordinator Mapule Sebone admits the project has turned into chaos.

"Only a few people pay the R10 a week we had agreed on to maintain the building. We are facing a real crisis."

She says the trust is still waiting for about R280,000 subsidy allocation from the provincial government to turn the building into family units. "We are not giving up," Sebone says.

Next week the trust will discuss resolving the problem.
Squatter camp feels left out

BY FKILE-NISHELELO MVAYA
City Desk

While some squatter communities around Gauteng prepare to move to better residential areas, one of the oldest in the region, Mshenguville, does not understand why they are being left behind.

The squatters first invaded the site set aside for a soccer ground and a golf course in 1990.

Sixteen years later, Mshenguville still does not have electricity, running water, roads or recreational facilities. There are no proper addresses and no postal service for the community.

The area is one of the least-serviced in Soweto. According to a local resident, Donald Madonsela, the squatter camp now has 20 taps and "many" portable toilets—a far cry from the days when the community had to make do with the yeld or nearby township toilets and two taps—but not nearly enough.

Residents have complained that criminals use the cloak of darkness to mug or rape women who use the communal toilets at night.

Nobesuthu Sibiya, a matric pupil, said she could not concentrate on her studies during the day because of the noise. At night she is at the mercy of the local "spaza shop" for candles. "If I find them closed, then I cannot study," she said.

Some residents want to move to a better area. "This is no place to raise children," said Pinky Moneli, adding that her daughter lived with her father to avoid diseases which are rampant in the area.

She is awaiting the "promise made by council", after putting her name on the housing waiting list, to be moved to either Snake Park, near Dobsonville or Orange Farm, south of Soweto.

About 410 families are served by a mobile clinic that makes its rounds on Thursdays. Those who get ill on other days use the nearby Mofolo Clinic.

"Ambulances are coming here because this was once an Inkatha stronghold," said Moneli.

Local ward councillor Pdile Xgsasgo said he was aware that residents wanted to move and hoped that the Southern Metro Council would respond to their concerns in the next council meeting later this month.
Squatters in Newtown still wait for promised land

Invasion at Eikenhof dampens relocation hopes of homeless families who live in squalor

Tommy Makoe

Two years ago, when Lindeloe-est, north of Johannesburg, squatters were evicted from the site they had illegally occupied, it was with the promise that they could be relocated within three weeks. They were temporarly moved to what used to be the transport department offices in Newtown, Johannesburg. Although they kicked fiercely against their eviction in June 1994, they gave up the fight when they were promised land in Eikenhof.

It is now more than two years and the squatters still have no land of their own. They are still housed in the filthy and smelly wing waiting for their promised land.

Raise hopes

“We have been forgotten. I do not know why there is such a delay. We have no choice but to live under these circumstances. We are forced to live in this condition,” said squatters’ representative Lucky Mabaso.

He said they were tired of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council’s promises. “They come, raise people’s hope and just vanish. Every time they come, they tell us they have identified land for us. They said they were going to move us to Eikenhof, but now the place is occupied by other people,” said Mabaso.

He said they were also told they were going to occupy open land next to New Canada station, but that never happened.

Mabaso said more than 1 200 people now live in the building, in which offices have been turned into makeshift homes. Between six and 12 families share the offices, with no doors separating each family from the others. Anything from blankets and curtains to corrugated iron are used as walls and doors to separate them.

“There is no privacy here and as a result, children see things they are not supposed to see. You cannot wash freely and have to wait until children are sleeping because the toilets have no doors,” said Lucky Motshibi.

Those who work have to wake up early to avoid the long queues at the three washing basins on each of the three floors.

“When we arrived here, 75% of the residents were employed but now only 50% are. Most of those who have lost their jobs were fired because they arrived late at work or were unable to go to work because of the living conditions here,” said Makaso.

France Rathbale, a security officer, finds it hard to sleep because she shares an office room with seven other families. “Mostly I work night shifts and in the day I cannot sleep because there is a shebeen in our room. The noise is loud and the drinking goes on for the whole afternoon,” said Rathbale.

He said most of those who worked also had to spend sleepless nights because of the noise from vehicles passing on the nearby freeway.

On the Saturday Star’s visit to the building this week there was a strong smell of urine from the poorly serviced public toilets. Within the building the smell of smoke from paraffin and gas stoves was ever present.

Rooms in the basement had been flooded from the water which enters through broken windows on rainy days and from the toilet.

“Residents lock the toilets because some people here do not want to wash them. I wish I had my own toilet,” said Roselina Mazda. “You should come on a Saturday and, I am telling you, you will not be able to enter one of these toilets because of the smell from people’s waste and urine,”

Thembi Kganga said her four-month-old baby was recently hospitalised for three weeks, suffering from viral meningitis. Kganga said the baby picked up the infection from the “unhealthy environment”.

The desire for housing was highlighted when one resident mistakenly took the Saturday Star team for officials from the provincial housing department.

Where is the house you promised me after you ran down my shack with a bulldozer? Where is it? Until when must I wait?” asked the infuriated man, who identified himself only as Bra Khumalo.

On a nearby window, the graffiti reads: “Now homelessness has come to an end – aiya khona (we are going there).”

“This was written after the news that we were going to moved to an area next to New Canada station. People were happy but... it never happened,” said Mabaso.

According to a spokesman for the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSM), Lawrence Boya, the council was not planning to move the squatters to the new occupied land in Eikenhof.

Development

He said nearby land was available but was awaiting development, which would start next year.

“It is now the responsibility of the SMSM to move the people. We will go on with the plans of the new defunct Johannesburg City Council which identified land for the squatters in Eikenhof.”

But Boya said his council was aware that the promised land could not accommodate the squatters’ community which had grown since they were temporarily relocated. “While we are going to move some to Eikenhof, we will have to look for alternative land to accommodate the others.”
Disgraceful conditions

ABOVE: "showing a brave face ... these children know of no other home besides what used to be the transport department building, in which more than 1,200 people now live.

RIGHT: Washday blues ... Sheila Vuso removes dried clothes from the washing line on the rooftop of the dilapidated building in Newtown.
We've now polluted our playground and torn down our trees. People now say they have no money or regulations. They spent money on repairs before moving in.

Acquisitions

Evangels

Park Rezoning
Galveston's homeless hit back

By Rosana Ramil

3,000 Evicted Families Recently Refused to Move to Wellies Farm

We must people be dumped in some special area. Simple because why we want a cemetery and why French? We are not moving.
Better deal for squatters

By Bunty West

More than 4,000 families squatting on Gauteng provincial administration land near Lenontong Hospital in Krugersdorp are to have their water and sewage facilities upgraded.

The settlement started after 71 families were evicted from a nearby farm in July 1995.

They had invaded the farm, which lies within Roodepoort's boundaries, in the hope of jumping the housing queue.

On eviction they were moved to their present site until another site could be found for them.

This never happened and, within a few months, the settlement had grown to 1,000 families.

Known as Leratong, the area is now home to more than an estimated 4,000 families.

A register will be taken of all the residents in order to prevent further growth of the settlement.
Illegal occupants given ultimatum

By Mokgadi Pela

THE Gauteng department of land and housing has issued a week’s ultimatum to illegal occupants of houses in Thokoza.

The move follows incessant pressure from the Thokoza Phenduka Displaceses Committee (TPDC) and the local branch of the South African National Civic Organisation.

Spokesman for the department Mr Jubie Matlou said yesterday that if the ultimatum was not honoured “we will use force to remove the illegals”.

He confirmed that the department would hold a meeting with the Alberton sheriff to issue eviction orders against those not complying with the directive.

If the move goes ahead, it will bring to an end the plight of more than 600 families who were evicted from their homes seven years ago at the height of the warfare between hostel inmates and residents.

The department’s ultimatum coincides with the apparent willingness of the Thokoza branch of the IFP to speed up the process. Speaking to Sowetan at the weekend, branch secretary Mr Petrus Sithole said the IFP wanted a list of those whose houses had been illegally occupied “so that we can assist in returning them to their homes”.

The law

Coordinator of the TPDC Mr John Khumalo has reacted favourably to the department’s ultimatum, adding: “It’s time the law protected those whose rights have been violated. We will watch with keen interest to see if the department acts on its threat.”

Leaders of the TPDC have in the past called on the Gauteng department of safety and security to provide the necessary protection to “those who have moved into their houses so that we do not experience acts of intimidation from faceless people”. Matlou said security was being considered to prevent acts of vandalism and intimidation.
Weiler’s Farm to get R10-m

By Joshua Raboroko

WEILER’S Farm, an informal settlement situated about 45 kilometres south of Johannesburg, is to be turned into a “modern township” with basic services and communal amenities.

Gauteng housing and land affairs department has allocated R10 million to upgrade various projects, including land acquisition, community participation, pre-planning investigation and establishment of 4 800 residential sites.

Presenting his budget in the legislature this week, Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said the upgrading would be introduced by the government together with the Weiler’s Farm Thuthuka Foundation and the Greater Johannesburg Southern Metropolitan Local Council.

The project would be started this year and completed in 1999, Mofokeng said, adding that similar projects would be undertaken in other informal settlements.

The more than 2 500 families of Weiler’s Farm have been without basic amenities since the settlement was established in 1986 when the community was permitted to settle there.
Alex squatters on the brink of river disaster

Sheer weight of shacks threatens to send them tumbling into Jukskei River unless people move

BY ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

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uthorities warned yesterday that 20,000 people living in the banks of the Jukskei River in Alexandra are in danger and have begun planning their removal to a safer area.

They warned that the riverbank was close to collapsing under the weight of about 5,000 shacks, many of them occupied by legal and illegal immigrants.

Eastern council official Anthony Blandford said: “Because of erosion by the river along the heel of the bed, the river banks are in jeopardy of caving in. This has become a life-threatening area. Flooding from tributaries of the Jukskei could cause the banks to collapse anytime,” he said.

He added that because the problem had become too big for the Eastern council to handle alone, the Department of Home Affairs, several countries’ embassies and President Mandela himself had been asked for assistance.

The president had been asked to make the area a priority project and had also been invited to inspect the area personally, said Blandford.

The main problem with the relocation of people was that there were many foreigners from other African countries, he said.

According to Blandford, the council’s long-term plan for the foreigners was to provide development and empowerment programmes so that they could eventually return to their countries and contribute to their economies.

He said negotiations were in progress to relocate the foreigners to a Department of Home Affairs reception area in Randfontein, and to relocate the South African citizens to the Far East Bank of Alexandra.

“We are looking at land in phase 3. The shacks which will be erected there will be only on a temporary basis for about 18 months to two years,” he said.

A registration process was already in progress to fully ascertain how many people were living along the river, he added.

To facilitate the solution of the problem, the council had recently launched the Jukskei River Project. A steering committee had been formed involving participation of all neighbouring communities, civic and industrialists in nearby Marlboro, said Blandford.

He also said the Department of Water Affairs was helping with advice on the rehabilitation of the river and river beds once the squatters had moved.
600 Tokoza families to be evicted tomorrow

STAFF REPORTER AND
OWN CORRESPONDENT

The sheriff of the court will serve formal eviction orders tomorrow on 600 families who illegally occupied houses that were abandoned at the height of the violence in Tokoza.

Gauteng government spokesman Themba Maleleke said the legal owners and tenants who fled their homes in the Phendula area, have for the past seven years been squatting all over the East Rand with friends and families.

As tension rises ahead of the final steps to evict the illegal occupants, the Tokoza Phendula District Committee and local councillors have pleaded for maximum restraint.

The TPDC urged members at a weekend meeting at the P.R. Maphaneza Higher Primary School to play their part in avoiding inciting violence.

The illegal occupants have expressed concern that they have nowhere to go if they are evicted and have called on the Gauteng government to provide them with alternative accommodation.

But Maleleke said the illegal occupants would be expected to return to the areas from which they had come.
Plan is
Marshalls

is Dropping Cauterung

heartland. Mugo Segagat and Tangen Annaporal Report on the urban time bomb
A Human Food

Millions of people camped in informal settlements are transforming the country's industrial

Homelessness and a

...
Homeowners at mercy of tenants

Squatters threaten to burn houses down when asked to leave, and nothing is done by either council or police to help

BY ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The harassment of Alexandra property owners by tenants living illegally in their homes is increasing daily, according to the Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association spokesman Rakesh Koobole.

The owners, are often terrorised by the tenants - who don't pay rent - and find themselves in a position where not even the law is on their side.

Koobole himself fell victim to this situation last weekend. He had two people living in his house who had not been paying rent since 1994. He obtained an eviction order and the sheriff evicted the tenants. Koobole removed the door and roof of the rooms but last Friday - a day later - they returned and laid a charge of theft against him.

"Koobole is desperate: "It seems there is no law which protects property owners. This is my property, it is my private place. I paid for it but it is taken over by other people who do what they like and live here for nothing. I want the rooms for my daughter who has finished her matric."

"We are terrorised by these tenants and have no legal protection. We don't know which way to turn," he said.

Koobole is one of hundreds of Alexandra property owners who face the same problem. Yet no one appears to be able to help them.

The Human Rights Commission's (HRC) head of the legal department, Mogam Moodliar, said the commission was seeking legal opinion to ascertain whether the owners had rights in terms of the Land Restitution Act.

DP Gauteng MPL Jack Bloom said he was disappointed in the approach of the HRC which had attempted to mediate the issues rather than directly ensure that legal rights were upheld.

Eastern Cape communications officer Keith Peacock said a registration process was in progress to find out who the legal owners and tenants were, but until such a register was complete it would be impossible to carry out evictions.

The land dispute started under the Group Areas Act when the Government expropriated properties and then granted owners permission to rent their own properties back from the State. Many repurchased their homes in the 1990s.

Caroline Nkosi is another victim of tenants. She has 10 living on her property. Her children want to move in, but they are unable to do so because the tenants refuse to move.

"People come here and build their shacks on my property wherever they want and I can do nothing. If I dare tell them to leave they threaten to burn the house down. Nobody at all is helping us - the councillors and the police do nothing."
Millions to upgrade squatter camps into formal townships

By TOMMY MAKOE

Hundreds of Gauteng squatter camps are to benefit from a multimillion-rand provincial housing department programme to upgrade them to fully fledged townships.

This community-based programme, with a total budget of R55-million, is to be allocated to both the former Transvaal Provincial Administration informal settlements and other upgradable squatter camps, which mushroomed largely after 1990.

Gauteng director of land affairs Careen Engelbrecht said that before the 1984 general election, the now-defunct TPA had initiated a programme to formalise the informal settlements. The new provincial government is now implementing the long-promised plans as well as looking at more recently established squatter camps on both private and state land.

She said R55-million out of the total budget would be spent on the settlements identified before 1994. The remaining R29-million would be used to revamp nine other squatter camps that were not earmarked by the TPA for upgrading.

The provincial government has invited local authorities to apply for funding to upgrade informal settlements in their jurisdiction.

Already the Benoni Transitional Local Council has applied to upgrade four settlements in its area, and applications have also come from the Leloa/Vaal, Bekkersburg, Khayalami and Thutuka local authorities.

Engelbrecht said the provincial government had identified 200 upgradable informal settlements.

"Formalising the other 200 upgradable squatter camps could take more than 10 years — this depends on the funding," she said.

"It is a long-term goal because the problem is that most of them were occupied without any formal planning. They have poor infrastructure and, besides, the legal process of formalising them is complex.

"Each site will cost between R1 200 and R1 600, which will be part of the subsidies for the upgrading of the sites. Because of budget constraints, our priority for now is low-cost areas," Engelbrecht explained.

Most of the provincial funding covered town-planning costs, surveying, transfer duties and the purchase of land.

**Formalising**

She said her department had completed all the paperwork for formalising Orango Farm, a squatter camp near Vanderbijlpark with 30 000 sites. Orango Farm will be declared a township next month.

The department is also investigating other former TPA squatter camps, including Zonk/Zizame in the East Rand, Ivory Park and Rabbie Ridge near Kempton Park, Doornkop in Soweto, Poorhouse near Krugersdorp, two squatter camps in Rietfontein, and Soshanguve next to Pretoria.

"They will probably be fully formalised in the next six months," Engelbrecht said.
squall and anger became part of their lives,
As they continue to await their promised land,

...
HUMAN STENCH: Catherine Adams sweeps the sewage from her room in the former Transport Department offices

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE
Squatters must move away, sa
A grim time ahead for 23 families who have been evicted from their temporary h:

BY MELANIE-ANN FERNS

The future of 23 families evicted from their homes on a Rainbow Chicken property close to Lanseria airport last week looks grim. They have until today to find other accommodation before being evicted from the property where they have been living in tents, for the past few days.

The private landowner who took pity on the 23 families and has allowed them to live on her land since last Tuesday has been receiving death threats from other landowners.

"I don't know who they are, they disguise their voices and say ugly things to me. They even threatened my children and said they would mutilate them and me. I felt sorry for these people (the squatters), but if things carry on like this then they will have to go," she said yesterday.

The squatters are now waiting for the outcome of a meeting between neighbouring farmers and the owner of the land on which they were given refuge.

Neighbouring landowners have already told the homeless group to leave the property by today because the owner had not consulted them before allowing them to squat.

Sam Selepe, one of the evicted residents, said they were waiting for the landowners to decide whether they could stay until other accommodation was found for them.

"We were getting additional material to set up shacks, but we cannot do so because of the threats from the neighbours. They said we are disturbing them and that they don't feel safe and that we will be evicted on Monday," he said.

One of the neighbouring farm owners confirmed that they were unhappy about the squatters moving in and confirmed that a "closed" meeting would be held to discuss the problem.

He was, however, unable to say when this meeting was scheduled to be held.

"I have people on my farm. I look after them because they have been here for many years. They are not people from outside.

"What I want to know is where they (the squatters) are coming from? Where were they before? I feel sorry for them, but this is a big problem," he said.

Immediately after squatters moved into the area, property values dropped and crime increased, he added.

Another problem was that the squatters were continually breaking down fences on the farms, he said.

He said he was not aware of any threats nor of the fact that the squatters had been given until today to move out of the area.

Families must leave today

BY MELANIE-ANN FERNS

A woman stands up at gathering storm clouds in dismay as a young child clings to her skirt. Hers is one of 23 families from the Bloubosrand/Lanseria area who were evicted from their homes last week.

They were offered sanctuary on a small piece of land for the next three months until other accommodation was found for them, but now have to move because of continuous threats to the property owner.

When they were evicted from their homes on the Rainbow Chicken property close to Lanseria airport last week, they took with them only a few possessions they could transport by car.

With a few pieces of corrugated zinc they managed to find, the families put up a small shack, barely 2m in length and breadth, where the women and children could sleep. Another shack was erected for the men, but this offers little protection against the elements.

The Rhema Church came to their assistance with 16 tents, the majority of which can only accommodate two people, and several bags of mealie meal.

The squatters receive water from the main house, but have no toilet facilities, except for a single outside toilet which serves those families already living on the property.

Those who have jobs buy food which they contribute to the whole community, and everyone "eats from one pot". Continuous rain over the past few days has made their situation almost unbearable as they are forced to stay inside the cramped tents.

There is no electricity, and people try to burn candles inside the tents, but they know this is dangerous.

The squatters are not sure what the future holds as they await the outcome of a meeting scheduled to be held by other landowners, where their future is to be discussed. No indication
Uncertain future... 23 evicted families find a temporary home in a few tents, but will soon have to move if neighbouring landowners have their way.

Meanwhile, the squatters have been told by the police to move out of the area. "We are not scared of the people. We are scared of the way they've been treated," Petro Sithole, ANC councillor for Ward 29, which includes the Blueband, Langesdrift, Zandevlei and Northgate regions, said yesterday. "We are here for the people. We are not scared of the people. We are scared of the way they've been treated."
Rhema to shelter squatters

TWENTY-THREE families evicted from a property near Lanseria Airport and given temporary refuge by a landowner, yesterday moved to yet another a temporary shelter in Randburg.

African National Congress councillor Mr Petros Sithole said the squatters, evicted from property owned by Rainbow Chickens last week, were transported to a property in Kya Sands by the Rhema Church yesterday.

Sithole said the move was temporary, adding that he feared people might be opposed to the presence of the squatters in Randburg. He said the families would resist attempts to have them removed from the new premises.

After their eviction last Tuesday, the families were first given refuge by a private landowner—a gesture which provoked anger among neighbouring farmers. The landowner said he had received threats since allowing the families onto his property. He had given Sithole notice to vacate so that he could get some peace.

Rhema Church leader Pastor Ray McCallum yesterday offered to mediate between landowners and the families.

"When we first heard about this a week ago we were prepared to take the families onto our church hall in the area, so long as the Gauteng authorities supported us in bringing all the stakeholders together," he said. — Sapa.
By Anna Cox

Some ANC politicians are accusing farmers of evicting blacks to form a white league in the north.

Homeless flocking to Luswa Farms
Squatters demand action

By Dan Fuphe

About 2 000 members of the Greater Germiston Squatters Association gathered outside the administration offices of the Germiston Town Council, on Monday demanding that their organisation be recognised and that the council provide them with facilities.

GDSA chairman Mr Majola Mkosana, told Germiston mayor Mr Calvin Sambo that residents had decided to march on the council after officials apparently ignored their letters for recognition.

"From today, we hope that the council acknowledges the existence of GDSA," Mkosana said.

In a six-point memorandum presented to Sambo the marchers demanded that:

- Officials recognise the GDSA;
- The council appoints a senior liaison officer to assist them with efforts to improve their lives;
- The principle of self-determination and the involvement of GDSA members in the provision of homes or facilities be accepted; and
- Full disclosure be made by council of any plans regarding squatter camps or any informal settlements in the area.

The memorandum also read: "Our members are decent, homeless people living under appalling conditions in the city of Germiston.

"The credibility of the present administration must be questioned as long as this problem is not seen to be receiving the attention it deserves."

It also lashed out at the local Town Council for evicting 680 people including 68 young children from the old Germiston police station.

"For 18 months this eviction has been inevitable yet the council did nothing about the future of these people."

The memo further read: "If 580 people cannot be considered what hope is there for the 200 000 presently living in similar conditions?"

Sambo said while he sympathised with the GDSA, it would take about six months for his council to address their demands.
Land invaders families facing the boot
Violence flares as squatters are evicted

1 dead, 4 hurt as 600 shacks demolished near Randfontein

BY GILL GIFFORD

One person died and four were injured when squatters clashed with the police and members of a private security firm who tried to evict them from municipal property near Randfontein on the West Rand today.

About 600 shacks were demolished by a private security company which started the eviction process at about 5.30am.

The squatter camp was this morning cordoned off with barbed wire and the security guards smashed up the shacks with crowbars. There were sporadic clashes - including exchanges of gunfire - between the residents and the security guards.

Groups of panic-stricken women and children huddled together as the evictions and clashes continued. The evictions were scheduled to go on for most of the morning.

Police spokesman Sergeant Herman Esterhuizen said the Randfontein Town Council acquired a court eviction order to move the growing community off municipal land bordering Mohlakeng township just outside Randfontein.

About 150 workers from AB Security started breaking down shacks and moving people off the land just before 6am.

The body of an unknown man was found in the settlement. He had been shot in the chest and right leg.

Residents from the camp marched to a police station in Mohlakeng where they gathered and started throwing stones.

Esterhuizen said it had not yet been established who the house belonged to.

Police who were monitoring the situation fired rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. Residents fired back and one woman was injured.

Lucina Mokoena (37) was shot in the right shoulder.

A docket of public violence was opened at about 7am.

Esterhuizen said "police have fired no live rounds and are on hand to monitor the situation."

He said building material from the demolished shacks would be taken to Botha plots in Randfontein where they would be stored for seven days and then sold on public auction if unclaimed. Property left on the scene would be taken to police stores in Randfontein.

As evictions proceeded two more injured people were reported. Injured. Gregory Manzila was shot in the right leg and another unnamed man was also shot.

At about 8.15am 26-year-old Henry van der Schyff from AB Security was stabbed in the head and arm. He was taken to hospital in a serious condition.
One dead, four hurt as squatters defy eviction

Johannesburg – One person died and four were injured when squatters clashed with police and private security staff trying to evict them from municipal property near Randfontein on the West Rand today.

About 600 shacks were demolished by a security company, which started the eviction in the early hours.

The squatter camp was cordoned off with barbed wire and security guards broke up the shacks with crowbars. There were sporadic clashes – including exchanges of gunfire – between residents and security guards.

Groups of panic-stricken women and children huddled together as the evictions and clashes continued.

Police spokesman Herman Esterhuizen said the Randfontein Town Council had acquired an eviction order to move the squatter community from municipal land bordering Mohlakeng township just outside Randfontein.

The body of an unknown man was found in the settlement afterwards. He had been shot in the chest and right leg.

Residents from the camp marched to a house in Mohlakeng, where they gathered and started throwing stones.

Sergeant Esterhuizen said it had not yet been established who the house belonged to.

Police who were monitoring the situation fired rubber bullets to subdue the crowd. Residents fired back and a woman was shot in the right shoulder.

Sergeant Esterhuizen said: "Police have fired no live rounds and are on hand to monitor the situation."

He said building material from the demolished shacks would be stored for seven days and sold by public auction if unclaimed.
Squatters threaten violence over removal

Pule Molebeledi

SQUATTERS evicted from council land in Randfontein on the West Rand in an operation which left at least one person dead yesterday had vowed to attack property and kill a person if their shacks were demolished today, Sanco spokesman Jonathan Pase said.

Sapa reports Pase said the squatters had vowed to attack a house in neighbouring Mohlakeng in reprisal for the first shack demolished. If a second shack was demolished, they would attack an electrical substation, then take a life in for the third.

The joint police and private security company exercise to evict the squatters left one person dead and five seriously injured. Police spokesman Sgt Herman Esterhuizen said the operation was met with violent resistance by some squatters who stoned and threw petrol bombs at AB security company employees. Police responded by using rubber bullets and tear gas.

Esterhuizen said the body of a man was found later with bullet wounds in the chest and leg. One of those injured was a security company employee who was stabbed in the head and back.

Two vehicles, one belonging to the Randfontein Trading Centre and another to Western Board and Timber Sales, were damaged by petrol bombs.

Esterhuizen said police were called in only to monitor both the squatters and the security company which was employed by the Randfontein sheriff.

Some squatters had already started rebuilding their shacks yesterday and vowed not to move.

Esterhuizen warned that police would demolish any shacks rebuilt during the night.

Pase disputed police statements that only one person had been killed, saying that reports on the ground indicated that as many as four people had been killed. Esterhuizen denied claims by squatters that a woman and her one-day-old baby were among those killed.

Randfontein town clerk Ernest Lambani said the council obtained a court order on September 19 to evict squatters from the land adjacent to Toekomsrus and Mohlakeng townships. The squatters moved on to the land on September 17.

The court gave the squatters 15 days to remove their shacks and belongings. The two weeks following the court order saw the number of shacks mushroom from 57 to more than 1 000, Lambani estimated.

He said the land invasion was led by the Homeless People Federation and the Backyard Shack Dwellers' Association. The organisations were dissatisfied with progress on a low-cost housing project in the area, known as Mohlakeng Extension 4.

Picture: Page 3
Council admits it can't cope

BY AURIA COX

The 400 people evicted from a private farm in North Riding, Randburg spent their second day on a pavement in the area last night.

The homeless people have built makeshift shacks as protection from the wet weather but most of their belongings got soaked after last night and this morning's rains.

No solution has yet been found as to where to move the squatters, who claim they have nowhere else to go.

Randburg ANC secretary Greg Schenaemann said the party was still investigating alternate sites to which the squatters could move.

The Johannesburg Northern council admitted yesterday it could not cope with the intensifying squatter and illegal invasion problem in the area.

Neighbouring residents expressed fury at the Northern council's inability to assist and offered to move the squatters and their belongings to camp outside the council's administrative offices in Randburg.

The council said last night that technical assessments of the land around Zandgradt and Diepsloot to check its suitability for housing, but it did not have huge chunks of land where people could be housed, said communications officer Khyani Mkonza.

The council had identified land for development but its efforts were thwarted by landowners who did not support development, said Mkonza.

Shattered shacks and ruined dreams

There are no roofs over the heads of families after violent evictions

BY BUNTY WES

More than 400 squatters, the remnants of the 5,000 people who illegally invaded Randfontein Council land at Mholakeng on the West Rand three weeks ago, spent a cold night in the open veld after being evicted yesterday.

Their shacks were destroyed and removed yesterday by AB Security, a company employed by the Randfontein sheriff to evict the squatters.

There were violent clashes with the police earlier in the morning and one man was reported shot dead. At least four others were injured.

The evicted squatters spent the night huddled next to their household goods and lit fires to keep warm as temperatures plummeted. Some, like Albino Zandinele, with his wife and three children, have nowhere to go. They moved out of their backyard lodgings in Mholakeng 10 days ago to stake their claim on a little land.

Dr Billy Reid, Randfontein's assistant town clerk, said that negotiations over the land were underway when the area was invaded. An eviction order was sought and the sheriff and the security company were removing the squatters.

Those left on the land say they are desperate and have nowhere to go. A council source said it was possible the people would be found an alternative site.

Trouble started at the squatter camp early yesterday morning. A man died after being shot in the chest and leg during the clashes which followed. At least four others were injured.

South African National Civics Organisation official Jonathan Pace said reports indicated that as many as 40 people had been killed. The Star could not verify this.

More than 1,000 shack dwellers have been resettled in two camps in the past three weeks. When guards moved in at 6 am, residents of the lower camp fought back.

Later in the day after the lower camp was demolished, they moved into the top camp, where residents put up little resistance.

For Johannes Moribe and Beauty Mopedi, the dream of owning their own piece of land had come to an abrupt end.

Both previously lived in backyard squatters in Mholakeng, paying the homeowner R80 a month for the privilege of erecting a 3sq m hut in the back garden.

"It came here because the land was free. I had even started paying R6 a week into a fund, started by a group of squatters, so that we could build proper houses. Now I really have nowhere to go and I will sleep here tonight protecting my few possessions even if it pours with rain," Moribe said.

Sidney and Anton, both Std 2 pupils at Toekomsrus Primary School, returned from school to find their home demolished. They were led away, too dazzed to speak.
Stranded little Sheila Gmana stands on the spot where her Mohlakeng home used to be before the men with crowbars moved in yesterday.

Injured ... a squatter is helped away after he was allegedly assaulted by members of the security team who tore down his shack.
North Riding homeless vow to stay on pavement until they are helped

BY ANNA COX

The 400 squatters who have been living on a pavement in a residential area in North Riding, Randburg, since Monday have vowed to remain there until Greater Johannesburg's Northern council finds them alternative land.

North Riding residents and the squatters themselves have lashed out at the Northern council for failing to assist the group, who were evicted from a private farm in the area on Monday.

They have accused the council of making false promises.

The squatters have built makeshift shacks on the pavement, but have no toilet or cooking facilities.

Some claim they have not eaten since Tuesday.

Abraham Mtulula said there were pregnant women, and children, sleeping in the rain.

The council sends a water tanker once a day.

"The council doesn't want to help. They make empty promises. We will stay here until they find something for us," Mtulula said.

David Motsatsaing said people were soaked every time it rained and most of their possessions were wet.

He too said he would remain until the council did something.

North Riding resident Jenny Allen said she and a group of neighbours spent all of yesterday trying to find alternative accommodation, but were blocked every time by council officials who threatened to remove the squatters if they went up to council land illegally.

The Northern council said it could not cope with the intensifying squatter and illegal invasion problem in the area.

Technical assessments were being made on plots of land around Zandspruit and Diepsloot to check their suitability for housing, but the council did not have huge chunks of land where people could be housed, communications officer Khanyi Mkonza said.
Land only for those squatters on waiting list

By: Bunty West

The Randfontein council yesterday identified a piece of land south of the town as a suitable temporary home for some of the squatters who invaded council-owned land in Mohlakeng on the West Rand three weeks ago.

According to Zeph Mhlongo, chairman of the executive committee, town engineers were completing their reports about the temporary site and would place them before council as a matter of urgency.

If necessary, a special council meeting would be held to ensure that there were no delays in transferring the land.

"But only those who already have their names on the council waiting lists will be eligible for a place on the site," Mhlongo said.

On Wednesday, at the start of the evictions, there were clashes between AB Security personnel, employed to demolish 1 000 shacks in two camps, and the squatters. One man was killed and several were wounded.

Fighting started as AB Security arrived to demolish 600 shacks at the first camp. In the afternoon, at the second camp, there was no resistance.

Trouble began again in the late afternoon when squatters from the first camp tried to rebuild their shacks.

Security men sent to the scene were attacked by pangas and axe-wielding residents. Four men suffered head injuries and one was in a serious condition last night.

Yesterday, as squatters picked their way through the smouldering remains of the devastation left during the demolition of their shacks, most vowed to remain on the land.

Angry that their possessions had been carted off to a storage facility in Randfontein, many said they had lost their belongings "stolen by the workmen in red overalls" - AB Security employees employed by the sheriff.

The scene was one of havoc as the two camps, which had held 5 000 people, were strewn with furniture, bedding, building material and barbed wire.

Large fires, set by AB Security, burnt what was left of the combustible items, and squatters stood around warming themselves as temperatures plummeted and the overcast sky promised more heavy rain.

The squatters, many of whom have lived in Randfontein for several years, came from Toekomsrus and Mohlakeng, where they had lived in backyards.
Last shacks come down
Squatters look on as

Photo Thickness

Richard E. Morse

Opposite

Squatting, who had occupied council land, look on helplessly. The squatters spent the night in the rain after their shacks were demolished.

Land and water guards, accompanied by police, burnt and carted off all during the demolition of shacks in proclamation on the West.

northwest of the city. The site of the proposed firm is now a large, wooded area. The site was chosen for the firm's consideration.

The proposed firm is to be completed by midyear and the site

is the location of an existing council.

The site was chosen for the firm's consideration.

The location of an existing council.
Sanco calls on Randfontein council to quit

THE South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) yesterday called for the resignation of the Randfontein town council and condemned what it termed the brutality and heavy handedness of the police during Wednesday’s squatter evictions which left one person dead and at least eight injured.

A statement issued by Sanco’s Mohlakeng branch threatened mass action if the Randfontein town council did not resign immediately.

“‘The community of Randfontein has given the councillors enough time to deliver but they have failed. The only alternative left for them is to resign,” the statement said.

Sanco said the community of Mohlakeng had waited patiently for a number of years for the Randfontein Transitional Local Council to facilitate the building of houses in Mohlakeng Extension Four, where infrastructure was installed in 1992 through funding from the Independent Development Trust.

“The Randfontein TLC has chosen to drag its feet until the community lost patience,” the statement said.

Sanco said it had submitted a housing proposal to the mayor of Randfontein, Gerrit Rooskrantz, in May but had not received any response.

Loss of life

“This action by the council and the police unfortunately led to the loss of an innocent life and injury to a number of people,” the statement said.

Sanco indicated it would call a mass meeting to plan further action.

The situation in the area was yesterday described as quiet but tense.

Police spokesman Sergeant Herman Estehnaizan said no incidents had been reported yesterday and police were patrolling the area. He confirmed that the private security firm, AB Security which had been contracted to carry out the evictions, had completed its work on Wednesday. — Sapa.
Call for houses for W Rand squatters

By Sello Serpe

CONCERNED residents in Mohlabeng near Randfontein have called on the Randfontein Town Council to provide alternative housing for thousands of residents whose shacks were pulled down by the council on Wednesday.

Mr David Nitong, a spokesman for an ad hoc committee representing tenants of a suburb near the Zenzele squatter camp which was demolished, yesterday called on the council to deliver houses as promised.

Nitong said during earlier negotiations the council had promised to supply basic needs such as water and temporary sanitation facilities while an alternative area to accommodate the homeless was being arranged.

Denying that the council was instrumental in ensuring that the council evicted the squatters, Nitong pointed out that the committee requested the council to provide accommodation for the residents.

Meanwhile, the council yesterday continued to pull down the remaining shacks which were illegally pitched on its land.

Employees of a security firm hired to demolish the shacks also burned the wooden pillars used to fortify the shacks.

Residents said they spent the night in open veld in the damp following heavy rains which hit the Reef late on Wednesday and yesterday.

However, some women and children were lucky as they were accommodated for a night at a local hall while men remained behind to keep an eye on their property.

Mrs Nomzulelo Dlwu (34) and her two sons Lonwethu (4) and Onqhilule (18 months), were however not so lucky. They spent the night in the veld.

"I do not know where we are going to sleep tonight," she said.

http://www.iol.co.za/
Council offers squatters land

By Sello Serepe (Sowetan 16/10/97)

SQUATTER families of Bothabano settlement, near Evaton in the Vaal Triangle, agreed to vacate a private land belonging to a local businessman after the Vereeniging/Kopanong Metropolitan Council (VKMC) promised to provide them with alternative land.

The 200 families have been living under threat of eviction since September 3 after businessman Tony Ford obtained a court order empowering him to reclaim his land from the families.

Yesterday morning, the local sheriff and 'wreckers' from a Johannesburg security firm escorted by police officers moved in, but decided to hold off any action against the squatters when officials from the SA Homeless, People's Federation (SAHPF) and the local SA National Civics Organisation intervened.

SAHPF spokeswoman Agrinette Madwayi said landowner Ford had given the community until the end of the week to move.

Addressing the community at an emergency meeting held at the settlement, chairman of the VKMC executive committee Jeff Rademeyer told residents that the land was privately-owned and the council had no power to stop the eviction.

However, he said, the council was prepared to provide alternative land and water if the community agreed to be resettled.

"We have already identified land and what we need is a commitment by the community that they will voluntarily relocate," he said. The council-owned land on which they would be accommodated is about 4km away.

The residents praised the council for its efforts and agreed to vacate the land. Further negotiations would be held between the council and the SAHPF.
Evicted squatters suffer while they wait
Jukskei farmers and land developers on collision course over squatters

By Anna Cox

Thousands of farmworkers and their families in the Jukskei Crocodile Catchment Area (JCCA), north-west of Johannesburg, stand to lose their homes through the massive industrialisation taking place there.

Desperate property owners who are being blamed for the evictions have now offered to purchase land with their own money. They plan to rehouse the farmworkers who have been living in the area for generations and who are allegedly being evicted by unscrupulous developers who get rid of them as soon as they take occupation.

Landowners also claim the Land Tenure Bill, aimed specifically at farmers, is discriminatory because it focuses on workers only and not on commercial property owners, who can leave the farmworkers with no rights to the land on which they have lived for years.

JCCA spokesman Wesel Swart said the association has made urgent representation to Land Affairs and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom to test the provision of the Extension of Security of Tenure Bill in resolving the problems.

"We are prepared to take legal action to ensure that property rights of farmworkers are preserved. The process will be supplemented by court action to protect common law rights. We want to avoid court action because it will effectively freeze any development in the subregion in the next five years and will negatively impact on our own aspirations and those of progressive landowners, but we will go that route if we have to," said Swart.

It is estimated there are more than 10 000 people living on farms. The JCCA, representing 14 areas and about 800 farmers, has consistently offered to assist the Northern council with its problems over evicted workers, but their offers have been ignored. Numerous requests for meetings had never been answered, said Swart.

The Northern council has welcomed the offer of land.

Councillor Ruby Mathang, however, accused some of the landowners of making false sales of their farms to evict workers and to circumvent the Land Tenure Bill.

He said the council had made written representation to the Land Affairs Department highlighting the potential problems in the area and for them to be taken into consideration for the bill.

"The landowners have also lashed out at politicians who have been blaming them for evictions taking place in the area.

"We take the strongest exception to the deliberately selfish and malicious statements by these people to create instability and destroy goodwill. We are determined not to accept the blame and the racist-based accusations that we are attempting to start a veldkloof in the area," said Swart.

Property owners say "shack farming" in the area is one of the main causes for the evictions. People were buying pieces of land which did not have services and hiring out stands at between R80 and R250 a month. Squatters eventually stopped paying because there were no services and the result was that owners then started evicting, said Swart.

Unoccupied property also posed a problem because it was invaded illegally and when the owner decided to make use of it, he then had to embark on the whole lengthy and costly eviction process.
Concerns of homelessness must be met
The world as it is: Wednesday morning, October 8 1997. One person has died and four are injured. This follows action by a security firm hired by Randfontein Town Council to cordon off council-owned land and demolish about 500 shacks erected in past weeks and evict their residents from Mohlakeng backyards.

The backyard-dweller-turned-land invaders were protesting against the failure of the town council to discuss with them development plans for sites where they could build. They maintain they have been fobbed off by the council for many months. That is, until they invaded land and the Randfontein council served notice of court proceedings to evict them.

The problem of inadequate accommodation in backyards is enormous. In 1988 the Urban Foundation noted that 2.4 million people lived in shacks in the central Witwatersrand. Of all shacksdwellers, 82% took place in the backyards of black townships. Generally speaking, little has happened to alleviate this situation since then.

Since 1985 some politicians, including the Gauteng premier, have made vocal promises of 350 000 houses in a very short time. In the meantime, housing delivery has occurred at snail’s pace, and what housing has been built is not for the majority of people desperate for a place of their own.

Why?

Randfontein Town Council not meet with its “homeless” constituency from the backyards in Mohlakeng to address a need that has existed for decades and has become a crisis issue?

Why did the council wait until frustrated, homeless people from the backyards invaded land to try to get the council to talk with them?

Why did the town council not respond to the plea to talk about proper and effective ways to develop, but prefer instead to engage in costly litigation and security people with guns, to demolish and evict? Why the inevitable result of people being hurt, a life lost and still no safe homes?

Why is the Randfontein Town Council now spending money on litigation and violent means rather than on developing serviced land and housing so deeply longed for?
We have to do things better. Our leaders must show the way in using the resources we have to build things up, to help people to make their lives better, so they too can join in the construction of a new community and society in our transforming South Africa.

The Randfontein Town Council should turn around from ignoring and litigating against its voters: it can lead the way even at this late stage, in meeting with representatives from all quarters in Mohlakeng to get sustainable, hopeful development on track.

The most important question is can government, which has invested so much in transforming the housing/shelter policy, transform local government, the vital link in the whole programme, and translate the dream into reality?

The challenge of immediate response to the needs of five decades of unaccommodated urban people in the backyards of former "black townships" is with us now: failure to meet it is to risk the future of good government and stable urban settlement in the most populous region of our country.

The author is senior programme facilitator of the Interfaith Community Development Association.
Uprise for 301 Gauteng Informal Setlements

Move to turn squatter camps into townships will give residents security as well as basic services.

The Gauteng Housing and Urban Development Department has announced that 301 squatter camps in the province will be transformed into townships. This move is part of the government's efforts to provide security and basic services to residents living in informal settlements. The transformation process will involve the demolition of shacks and the construction of permanent housing units. The government has emphasized the importance of providing permanent solutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of these communities. Residents will benefit from improved living conditions, access to essential services, and a sense of belonging within a safe and secure environment.
36 homeless after houses demolished

Josey Smit

ABOUT 36 adults, pensioners and children have been sleeping outside since Wednesday after the demolition of their homes on a private holding in Sun Valley, Midrand, despite pleas to the landowner to delay eviction until other accommodation was arranged, residents and African National Congress (ANC) officials said at the weekend.

The residents — some of whom have lived on the land since 1979, when it was owned by their then-employer — said that five armed men pointed guns at the pensioners who were home on Wednesday afternoon before setting fire to and bulldozing the 10 houses on the property.

Midrand Metropolitan Local Council chairman Arvin Bhana, Midrand ANC branch chairman, said the plot's current owners, Louis du Plessis and his mother Erika, were granted an eviction order from the Pretoria High Court earlier this year and had contacted Naidoo a few months ago to find other accommodation for the residents.

Naidoo said she had put the residents on the waiting list for a government housing project on the Edenvale-Midrand border, but that the houses would probably not be available until next month.

She said she had tried to “stall” the eviction.

ANC sources said the destruction and threat of force was not within the landowners' legal rights.

Bhana said he hoped a nongovernmental organization could provide temporary shelter, as neither the council nor the ANC had such facilities. The du Plessis’s, who were reportedly out of town, could not be reached for comment.

Kahn

Continued from Page 1

on respect for rank and command structures. We will not allow friendships, camaraderie, political influence or racism to inhibit us in restoring standards, Kahn said. On the other side of the discipline coin, greater emphasis would be placed on internal and public recognition for good officers.

A system of performance standards to be introduced over three years would allow a more accurate assessment of individual performance. Achievers would be promoted, and pay differentials within grades would make it possible to reward good work.

Kahn said his plan also depended on progress with reforms of the entire judicial justice system to which the SAPS was contributing. It was necessary to lighten the burden on the police, courts and prisons by allowing not fines or admission of guilty payments in many less important cases.

None of the problems facing SA crime fighters was unmanageable. The key was to decide which were important and to focus on them first.

EU

Continued from Page 1

policies, but wider economic issues can be debated by all 15 members.

All 11 would-be EU members will participate in a March 30 kickoff meeting in London. The first six will start detailed membership talks while the EU will open “preparatory talks” with the rest to address some economic and political problems holding them back.

Turkey, on the other hand, was told to fold its tent and go home.

Unable to overcome serious human rights problems, solve its territorial dispute with Greece or come to grips with a myriad of economic difficulties, Ankara was not even deemed ready for the second team.

“Everyone recognizes Turkey is a significant power, that it’s a great people,” said British Prime Minister Tony Blair. “The criteria that we apply to Turkey are the same criteria we apply to all the countries. Europe is willing and wants to work with Turkey.”

To mollify the Turks, EU leaders invited them to a European conference, essentially an annual summit involving EU members and the 11 declared candidates. The gesture failed to excite Ankara and its acceptance of the deal was in doubt.

The others, however, were delighted. “I am sure there will be many technical problems,” said Prime Minister Janes Drezwijk. “But I think Slovenia has clearly overcome some of the problems. I think the major problems have been overcome.”

Czech President Vaclav Havel called the integration of his country into the EU “a priority that has no meaningful alternative”.

Getting the new members into the union will involve $84bn in economic aid, grants and soft loans in the 2000-2006 period to help the aspirants come up to EU standards.

None of the prospects are expected to be ready to join for at least four to five years, some much longer.

The EU leaders said they expected the Cyprus' Greek and Turkish factions to form one negotiating team to bring all of Cyprus into the EU. The northern third of the island, home to 200,000 Turkish Cypriots, is occupied by 30,000 troops from Turkey.

Turkey said yesterday it had cut political dialogue with the EU and rejected an offer to take part in a pan-European conference next year on joining the bloc. There will not be a political dialogue between Turkey and the EU, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz told a news conference, adding that Turkey would ignore EU statements on its rows with Greece and Cyprus.

He said Turkey would not proceed with integrating Turkish-held northern Cyprus if the EU launched membership talks with the island's internationally recognized Greek-Cypriot government. However, he did not say Turkey had withdrawn its application for EU membership. Yilmaz said Turkey would seek to boost ties with EU member states.

PEANUTS

By Charles Schulz

I DON'T KNOW WHO'S HAVING A HARD TIME BEHIND THE SCENES, BUT I'M GONNA HAVE A SHOWER.

BUT UNDER THE FACT IT IS BETTER GET RID OF IT BECAUSE IF IT HITS ME AT ALL I'M GONNA HAVE A RUN INTO THE GROUND.
SQUATTERS - GAUTENG
1998 - 1999
Gauteng braced for land invasion spree

By JACQUI REEVES

Gauteng can expect a wave of land invasions later this year and in early 1999 as the country approaches the next general election.

International examples have shown that land invasions increase in the year before an election and that state-owned land is seen as a "soft" target.

Carlien Engelbrecht, land affairs director in Gauteng, said this week her department was aware of this problem and planned to release more than 34 000 sites for settlement projects before March next year.

"No government wants to be heavy-handed with evictions in the year prior to an election, because the publicity that evictions generate causes people to question whether the government has delivered on election promises," Engelbrecht said.

She said South American examples had repeatedly shown this to be true and that her department would be working hard to keep land invasions in check.

In addition to the large number of landless already in Gauteng, and the additional 20 000 people who enter the province each month in search of work, the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs also has to deal with a "land mafia" that is operating in many informal settlements.

The "land mafia" helps the homeless to jump the housing queue by organizing them into groups and securing pieces of land for them to invade.

The organizers charge the homeless R50 to sign a housing deed and usually collect about 2 000 signatures.

Land near Johannesburg or sites to any major urban area is the most favoured by the "land mafia".

See Page 9
Gauteng has 2.5-m landless

MEC spells out pivotal role of local authorities in providing housing

By Joshua Raboroko

Local authorities have to play a pivotal role in the delivery of low-cost housing by providing essential services, land, safety and security, says Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng.

In his 1997-98 annual report, Mofokeng says through formalising residential areas, the size of the rate base of local authorities is increased.

"This also assists in ensuring that the Masakhane campaign is a success because local authorities are better able to render proper services and residents are able to acquire secure title," he says.

He says the upgrading of informal settlements extends good local governance to these areas, adding that the opening of township registers and the release of land allows the authorities to formalise road reserves and servitudes and to prevent their illegal occupation.

It was estimated that 2.5 million people were presently landless in the province, saying about 378 000 households were targeted for the delivery of secure tenure through the transfer of land valued at R7.9 million.

The provincial housing backlog was estimated at 761 000 households. The figure escalated at a rate of some 40 000 households a year as a result of natural growth and inward immigration.

As part of the national target to deliver one million units by April 1999, the department has set itself a delivery target of 243 000 units in that period.

The provincial hostels upgrading programme aims to improve the living conditions of some 90 000 inmates.
Council workers demolish shacks

Sowetan Reporter

HUNDREDS of families have been left homeless by a group of men — allegedly deployed by the Northern Metropolitan Local Council (NMLC) — who destroyed more than 400 shacks in the Diepsloot squatter camp, north of Johannesburg, yesterday.

Ms Nomsawethu Dube (25) and her two-month-old baby girl Thandokazi were without shelter last night because of the action: "I had just finished bathing my baby at about 9am when I heard people shouting. I rushed outside to investigate and saw these men demolishing my neighbour's shack," Dube said, adding that her neighbour had tried in vain to reason with the men.

Dube, who claimed she had been living at Diepsloot for more than a year, said the men had told the squatters they had to find alternative dwellings as they were occupying land illegally. "I was so confused I did not know what to do or where to start packing," she said. She was helped by other residents to collect and move her belongings. She slept in the open last night, guarding her belongings.

NMLC mayor Danny Kekana, said yesterday the order to evict the squatters had come from the Gauteng department of housing.

He said the department had set aside a budget to develop Diepsloot. This, however, had become impossible because of the high number of illegal squatters in the area.

As far as he was aware, Diepsloot residents had been warned of the eviction, which he said had started on Tuesday.

When Sowetan visited the area yesterday afternoon, schoolchildren were wandering around trying to locate their families whose shacks had been flattened.
Angry squatters rebuild shacks after eviction

BY ANNA COX

Diepsloot squatters started re-erecting their shacks at the informal settlement north-west of Johannesburg yesterday after they were bulldozed on Wednesday.

Although only some of the evicted residents received a reprieve following intense negotiations between community leaders and Greater Johannesburg’s Northern council, most of the squatters started rebuilding last night.

It was agreed that the 120 shack built above the floodline of the Jukskei River could be temporarily re-erected until next Wednesday when another meeting would be held. The 80 shacks built below the floodline would not be reconstructed and the residents would be requested to leave the area.

The residents—some on the R511 on Wednesday night to protest against the demolitions. Riot police were called in and the road was closed off for several hours.

Council spokesman Pule Buthelezi said the council had decided to take action when some 200 families illegally invaded the area last weekend.

“We have people on a waiting list. The council reaffirms its position of zero tolerance towards land invasions. It is on this basis that it was decided to demolish the most recently erected shacks in Diepsloot this week,” he said.

It cost the council R300 a month just to maintain one shack and this was draining the council of the limited resources available for providing services to the area, Buthelezi said.

Three people, including community leaders, were found to have been selling land illegally to the invaders, and charges would be laid against them, Buthelezi said.

“The people next to the river must leave because it is dangerous and it is our responsibility to ensure their lives are safe. The council will monitor this and ensure that it does not happen again,” he said.

Most of these “recent” land invaders, however, claim they have been living in Diepsloot for over a year.

“If the council says we have been here for one week, they lie. Look at our gardens and homes. We could not build them in one week. They gave us no notice. They just came while we were getting ready for bed and broke down our homes. Everyone, even small children, slept in the cold,” said squatter Mavela Mthale.

Edwin Matabuse was lying on his bed outdoors. “They broke my TV. We all slept in the cold, so we made a fire. We will stay here until the Government gives us land,” he said.
Eastern Council admits it has no money to help ‘tent people’

More than 350 squatters living on municipal ground nearly a year after eviction

By Bunny West

Nearly a year after being forcibly removed from the Welcome Home Centre in a Doornfontein factory, more than 350 people are still without a permanent home and live in tents on municipal ground at Marlboro Gardens.

When they were evicted they were told that they would be housed in new premises within six weeks, using R30-million set aside for that purpose by the Eastern Council’s housing department.

But neither the money nor accommodation became a reality and residents in the tent camp do not believe they will ever be moved.

Unofficial “mother” to the residents, Rosemary Moshoeshoe, said the authorities have forgotten them and turned what was to be a six-week wait on unsuitable land into a permanent situation.

“Officials used to visit us to see what our problems were, but now no one comes and we don’t know what is happening. One resident has already died from tuberculosis, and five others are ill with the disease,” Moshoeshoe said.

The situation is getting worse as people lose hope and faction fights break out.

“Some of the residents make a few rand by collecting tins, paper and plastic for recycling. At weekends they come back here and drink the money away. Then the fights break out and we don’t sleep because of the noise,” said resident William Dichahe.

He said that calls to the Bramley police station went unheeded and even the Flying Squad would not come out to help when there was trouble.

This was denied by Bramley police spokesman Captain Altus Mouton, who said all complaints were attended to. “We have to prioritise our call-outs and at weekends we are busy, but we do respond as soon as staff are available,” he said.

According to John Angus, a spokesman for St Michael’s Church in Bryanston, which is providing food and clothing for the families, the council has no money for land, let alone permanent accommodation.

“I keep going to meetings with council officials but they won’t admit they can do nothing to help these people.

“We are supporting them but the situation cannot go on as we’ve made them dependent on us and they really need to be helping themselves,” Angus said.

Attie Adendorff, the acting crisis manager for the Eastern Council, admitted that council had nothing planned for the tent village as there was no money to move the people elsewhere.

Window of hope ... Noxola Ndiomo (22) at the window of the tent she has lived in for the past year.
Historic building gets a cleaning in preparation for filming of a commercial.

Homeless move out of Rissik St Po

By FRANK GROENHAARDT

The building has been returned to the

doors open for the general public to be able to go in and out of the building. The security guard will still be on site, but the building is no longer a home for the homeless. The security guard and the

officers from the local police department will be monitoring the building to ensure that it is safe for the public to enter. The building was previously used as a homeless shelter, but now it is being renovated for a commercial project. The city has been working to

Address the needs of the homeless population in the area, and this building will be one of several new locations that will be

available for them. The city has been working with local organizations to help

find alternative housing solutions for the homeless, and this building will be one of several new locations that will be

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Squatters

By Khandi Mahomed

Water, land

Please Plead for

18/8/98

Kosumao 20/8/98

BOYET 80 families in the

Kosumao rubber estate.

Copyright 1998 by The Namibian

BACKGROUND

The Mamelubos are the last remaining original inhabitants of Kosumao. The land is the Mamelubos' birthright, and they have the right to live and die on the land as they have done for generations. The Mamelubos are proud of their heritage and are determined to preserve their way of life.

The Kosumao rubber estate is located in the eastern part of Namibia. The estate was once a thriving rubber plantation, but in recent years it has been abandoned and left to deteriorate. The Mamelubos have been living on the estate for generations, and they have a strong attachment to the land.

THE PROBLEM

The Mamelubos' land rights are being threatened by the government, which is planning to develop the area. The government has offered the Mamelubos a small compensation payment, but this is not enough to meet their needs.

THE REQUEST

The Mamelubos are requesting that the government recognize their land rights and provide them with adequate compensation. They are also requesting that the government allow them to continue living on the estate.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The government has stated that it is committed to respecting the Mamelubos' land rights, but they have also stated that they need to develop the area for economic purposes.

THE CONSEQUENCES

If the Mamelubos' land rights are not respected, they will lose their livelihood and their cultural heritage. This will have a negative impact on the entire region.
Outrage as showcase housing venture is made a squatter camp

Undertaking was that proper services be installed first

By Anna Cox

Squatters, Midrand residents and industrialists are outraged by a decision by the Khayelami metro council to start moving homeless people onto vacant land at Commerce 34 in Midrand.

This was done despite a written undertaking from the council that squatters would not be moved onto the land, known as the Mayibuye Project, until top structures had been built and proper services installed.

The council now plans to move 40 families a day onto the site until 1,800 have been relocated.

About 40 squatter families were moved from a privately owned property in Broadwalk, Midrand, over the weekend, just prior to a vicious storm. Women and children were forced to sleep in toilets while their belongings were damaged by the rain.

There are only two fire hydrants on site and only a few taps and toilets that work.

Squatter Aubrey Sekuteshanyane said he was not happy about the situation.

"But there is nothing we can do — they demolished the other site. People have been sleeping in the toilets for shelter from the rain, but yesterday we built our shacks again, but all our things got wet. We have been promised houses soon," he said.

But the council only has enough money for 400 of the 1,800 units until the end of 1998.

The move had been planned several weeks ago and officials could not have predicted the weather, said metro development executive manager Keith Naicker.

He said people had been moved onto the land without houses because there was no money.

He denied that the council promised to build top structures and said the agreement had only been made in principle. "There will be houses on that land as soon as money is available," he said.

This has infuriated many Midrand ratepayers and local industrialists who claim they worked for years on a plan which cost hundreds of thousands of rand, to establish a proper, model housing settlement from which all parties would benefit.

Local resident Bobby Lake said what had happened at Mayibuye was "a municipal shame". "It is inhumane to expect people to live like this. Instead of moving families, as promised, into completed houses, these settlers have had to rebuild their shacks next to toilets and will still have to wait for up to two years for the promised houses to be built.

"Many residents are appalled by this pitiful delivery of what promised to be a showcase development. There was intense pride in the plan worked out between the settlers, the neighbouring residents, the Gauteng housing department, Eskom and the housing board. We even obtained additional subsidies for them because of the ground conditions on the site," she said.

The local authority watchdog has now written to the public protector; to the president and to the minister of provincial affairs for urgent intervention.

Spokesperson Janet Schofield claims that by moving people onto the site without proper services, numerous contraventions of the National Environmental Management Act and the constitution took place.
Occupation of houses in Lebanon continues despite threats

BY FARHAN AL-TAYEB

Occupation of houses in Lebanon continues despite threats

BY FARHAN AL-TAYEB

Occupation of houses in Lebanon continues despite threats

BY FARHAN AL-TAYEB

Occu...
Drill Hall dwellers face eviction

BY WELCOME SESONAN

School's council met.

Ironically, that's not the only time.

When they came to talk.

They didn't know what was happening.

They just wanted to talk.

What could have caused such a stir?

It was the first time.

Something different.

Their concerns.

The council listened.

They took notes.

And then they began.

Talking about the future.

What could happen.

If things continued.

The council decided.

To take action.

Their decision.

The implications.

For the residents.

And the community.

The council's role.

To support.

And to listen.

Their duty.

To make decisions.

For the good.

Of everyone.

The council's mandate.

To ensure.

That everyone was heard.

And that everyone was understood.

Their commitment.

To unite.

And to act.

For the betterment.

Of the community.

The council's responsibility.

To address.

The issues.

And to find solutions.

Their responsibility.

To lead.

And to show.

That anything is possible.

With cooperation.

And with determination.

The council's responsibility.

To guide.

And to inspire.

Their responsibility.

To fight.

And to succeed.

For the community.

The council's responsibility.

To work.

And to dream.

Their responsibility.

To believe.

And to dream.

For the future.

The council's responsibility.

To dream.

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For the future.
Angry residents evict squatters

BY JOHANNES VOGEL

Angry residents hit back violently at criminals in Bellevue East last weekend when they trashed a block of flats occupied by drug dealers and other criminal low-lifers.

Armed with sledgehammers, and backed up by people with automatic shotguns and at least one carrying a handgrenade, they turned De la Rey and Gascoyne streets into a battlefield.

They smashed windows and doors and forcibly evicted about 150 squatters who illegally occupied the Leighton Court flats. The building has no electricity, water or sewerage. The owner has apparently abandoned the building with an estimated amount of R175,413 outstanding on rates, taxes and service fees.

A resident told the Saturday Star it was "even too hot for the police to handle", and they had only sprayed teargas before retreating.

A resident living opposite said the last straw was when one of the occupants broke into his house on Sunday morning. "They orchestrated all their criminal activities from the building," he claimed.

Residents involved in the "clean-up operation" said most of the houses in the area—which in the "good days" might have sold for R1-million or more—are up for sale.

"But even the 'For Sale' signs were stolen and our properties are devaluing by the day. We had no option," a woman said.

However, Superintendent Jameson Radingoana, of the Yeoville police, said they would not tolerate people who took the law into their own hands.

Richard Brown of the Safer Cities Project said building inspectors would be sent to assess the situation and make a decision about the future of the building.

The residents claimed that the flats are used for drug dealing, a shebeen, stolen goods and prostitution.

Maurice Smithers, chairperson of the Yeoville Community Development Forum, said the problem was that there were two desperate groups of people: the property owners and residents; and the squatters, who have no income or a place to stay. He said there were plans on the table to restore the area.

Various occupants of the building denied they were involved in any wrongdoing.
Squatters camp outside baths

By BUNTY WEST

Many of the squatters who illegally moved into the Turkish Baths, at the corner of Nugget and Noord Streets in Johannesburg eight months ago and who were evicted last week, are still camped on the pavement outside, refusing to be moved to Weller's Farm.

Security personnel employed by the Metro Council evicted more than 150 squatters from the building, which the council wants to upgrade and turn into a shelter for homeless people. Within weeks of it being emptied of squatters last year it was re-occupied.

Anthony Blandford, the executive officer for project facilitation and supply services in the Eastern Council's Urban Planning department, said the department had already received a R50 000 subsidy from the province to turn the building into a shelter.

The invasion effectively stopped any work being done and we had to go back to court to get the people removed. They were given adequate notice yet ignored us, so we had to forcibly remove them.

The building, which has no water or toilet facilities, was in a mess after the council retained security workers moved in. Cardboard partitions, separating families within several rooms, still lay on the ground as adults, many with small children were moved into the street.

But according to the squatters they were not given any warnings that they would be evicted.

Many refused to move from the pavement unless council found them an alternative place to stay.

When council suggested taking the families to Weller's Farm, in the far south of Johannesburg, most families refused to go.

Contractors have moved into the building to start refurbishing the facilities as an official shelter.
Pay up R300, or get no site!

Squatters claim councillor ripping them off

By STEVE DLAMINI

UNEMPLOYED and poor residents of an informal settlement in Soshangwe north of Pretoria are being forced to pay R300 to a councillor before being granted permits to occupy sites allocated to them.

Those who fail to pay are kicked out of the Block SS-MK informal settlement.

The councillor could not be reached for comment this week and failed to return phone calls from City Press.

The mayor of the Greater Akasia/Soshangwe Town Council, Olive Lekheleni, said the issue was between the councillor and residents.

"He is the man to talk to," she said.

The Gauteng government has often warned residents of informal settlements not to pay money to anyone who promises them houses.

Residents say the councillor said the money was in payment for permits for the sites and would also be used for the development of the area.

The Block SS-MK informal settlement has no toilets, roads or water, and residents are living in broken-down shacks.

Residents say that despite promises that the area would be developed, they are forced to hide behind bushes to relieve themselves and have to walk long distances to fetch water.

The chairman of the Block SS-MK Crisis Committee, Johannes Mokgetle, said tension among residents was high.

Mokgetle said the allocation of the site permits meant that residents could start building their own low-cost homes for which they would receive government subsidies.

"Some of us refused to pay the R300 because we did not trust the councillor.

Nowhere have residents of an informal settlement paid anything because they were allocated houses and the government subsidies," he said.

"He (the councillor) threatened residents with eviction and some have been forced to leave out of fear for failing to pay the money."

Residents have shown City Press receipts they received from the councillor after paying him.

Mokgetle said that unlike some informal settlements in Gauteng, theirs hardly had any toilets, water tape or electricity.

To answer the call of nature, residents have to wait until dark, then pretend they are looking for something while searching for a place to relieve themselves.

Local Community Policing Forum chairman Oupa Nkoisi said residents had tried several times to call the councillor to a meeting to demand their money back, but he always failed to show up.

"We tried several times but we could not succeed."

"He does not have our interests at heart," Nkoisi said.

"The government is not aware that we are suffering here.

"When government officials visit the squatter camp they are being driven to a better developed area where the councillor has a house.

"Our women have to walk about 2 km to fetch water at our neighbour’s squatter camp.

"Sometimes these people don’t want to provide us with water, saying that they are paying for water that they don’t use," Nkoisi added.

David Seens, who also paid R300 to the councillor, said: "I still can’t see why I paid. Some of us don’t work and we are demanding our money back."

NATURE CALLS... Thabo Mogolwane (5) and Madlimalo Sisaiko (6) squat in the bush while little Portia looks on.

Pic: STEVE DLAMINI
Homeless people living in and around Library Gardens in central Johannesburg are chasing away customers from the few shops which are left doing business.

According to local shopkeepers, turnover has dropped dramatically and the rentals charged by council are so high that it is impossible for them to recover their monthly costs, let alone make a profit.

They blame most of their problems on the habits of the more than 30 squatters who live in the park who the shopkeepers say defecate, urinate, beg and steal from passers-by and visitors.

Farouk Badat, who owns the Library Gardens takeaway, said the council already charges him R2 500 a month in rent and now wants to put it up to R3 000.

"I don't think the monthly rental is worth more than R600, as over the past five years my customer base has dropped by 50%," Badat said.

He said every day he and his wife had to clean the steps of the shop because of the filth left there.

Badat added that apart from the filth, his storeroom which is housed across the park, had been broken into several times.

“My wife has even been held up at gunpoint,” he said.

A King Pie staff member said the squatters were definitely a problem and chased customers away.

But the squatters were adamant the situation wasn't of their making.

David Mpheli, a spokesperson for the mainly middle-aged men who sleep in the park, said the unemployed people who live in the park were honest.

Mpheli said that tsotsis moved in during the day to harass and steal. He did admit that the men used the toilet in the park and begged from passers-by.

The toilets are closed at night so we have nowhere else to go except in doorways,” he said.

Esram Muthamela, who says he has lived in the park for the past 15 years, said shop owners forgot about the times when the squatters had called the police to catch criminals, and when they helped arrest wrongdoers.

Despite several calls to the ward councillor for the area, Lennox Zembe, he did not respond.

A Parks Department official said no one from the department was available because of a one-day strike.
Crackdown on land use

By MOIPONE KOMANE

THE GREATER Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has taken a tough stand on illegal land usage following a metro-wide survey which revealed that close to 400 cases of this problem exist in Greater Johannesburg.

In the past three months notices and summonses were served, investigations conducted, scrapyards were terminated, and court eviction orders were issued to illegal land users.

This enforcement programme will be extended to the remaining inner-city suburbs that will be surveyed over the next six months, and the same procedure will be applied.

In the NMLC four scrapyards in Klipspruit were closed down and the figure in the SMLC stands at 12.

"Residents need to understand that a trading license does not exclude a person from having to comply with town planning schemes or by-laws.

"Application forms are available at council offices to apply for consent-use at a cost of R250. Applicants need to supply a title deed to property and/or a 'power of attorney," said Councillor Parks Tau, chairperson of the Planning and Urbanisation committee.

Adjoining land owners must be informed and given 28 days to raise objections. An advertising notice must be displayed on the site and applicants must write a motivation letter to reinforce the application.

"We are not being unsympathetic, we will view each case on merit," added Councillor Tau."
Entrepreneurs must follow rules

People living in the Thembalihle informal settlement despair over council plans to move them to another area and plan to march to the Premier's office tomorrow.

Residents have sinking feeling...
Police clash with forest-dwellers protest against relocation from reserve

Shilowa faced with land invasion poser

By Joshua Raboroko

The Gauteng government of Premier Mbhazima Shilowa faces a major challenge over land invasion by hundreds of squatters in Finetown and Lawley, 40km south of Johannesburg.

This challenge will stare the Premier and his government in the face when he officially opens the provincial legislature in Johannesburg this morning.

The two areas of Finetown, near Germiston, and Lawley, next to Entrecare, form part of what is referred to as the Valley of Shacks along the Johannesburg Golden Highway, stretching from Deuland, south of the city, to Purys in the Free State.

Government sources say there has been large-scale, illegal selling of land by syndicates to squatters despite warnings from the Gauteng housing and land affairs department that it will prosecute those found trading in land.

Destitute, homeless people in Lawley claimed they paid between R10 and R30 a site without water, sewerage and roads.

However, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council spokeswoman Ms Jenfi Moodley said that officially there were about 400 families living in the Lawley informal settlement.

They have been provided with basic services such as water and portable toilets, but there has been an influx of homeless people who have illegally settled on the land.

Moodley said the council received reports about illegal occupation of land in the area, including in Finetown. She was unaware that the invaders paid for land and said drastic action would be taken against those found guilty of the offence.

The land being invaded belongs to the province she said, adding that an urgent meeting has been convened with residents so they can explain how they obtained the sites.

The meeting is scheduled for Saturday.

The invasion comes when Shilowa's government is expected to make important announcements concerning his vision on the future control of the province. He was inaugurated as premier two weeks ago.

Sources say the opening of the legislature today by Shilowa as premier is likely to focus on delivery.
Pretoria Inner City tenants evicted

Homeless... An inner-city property for transport cars and a dog, 10 other people were evicted from

There’s why we are here, the battle

Join the fight again for your home.

The battle is ongoing. The fight for housing and the fight for rights.

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The battle is ongoing. The fit...
Department ignores order

By Siphwe Mpye

THE demolition of shacks in Lawley, south of Johannesburg, continued yesterday despite a court order prohibiting the Gauteng department of housing from evicting people in the area.

The court ordered the return of material and property confiscated from the site and prohibited evictions of any kind.

However, Ms Delia Maluleke, the spokeswoman for Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatile, said they were evicting people who had built new shacks.

"Empty and partially built new shacks were being demolished, not the old ones," Maluleke said.

As the order did not prohibit the demolition of new structures, they were pulled down, Maluleke said.

She said she expected about 400 shacks to have been destroyed by late yesterday afternoon.

Maluleke said the area was unsafe because it had a large concentration of dolomite and was unsuitable for housing development.

"The area is earmarked for further development other than housing," she said.

She said residents would have to go on a housing waiting list and the ones who could prove that they had lived in the area "for a long time" would be provided with alternative accommodation.

At the site of the demolitions, amid heated exchanges between residents, the police and members of a security company, the residents' representative Mr. Patrick Kuhleka, and the department's Mr. Motlalebo Molele, appealed for calm.

Kuhleka called for the return of all the confiscated property and the department to act in accordance with the court order.

During similar demolitions last week, a person was shot dead and four others were injured in clashes between residents and security guards.
No quarter for land invaders

By Justice Mohale

The Southern Metropolitan Local Council will continue to evict illegal land invaders in all areas of its jurisdiction in an effort to ensure that it is properly used, the council’s chief executive officer, Mr Chris Nqobo, said.

The decision follows the demolition of about 250 vacant shacks in Lawley Extension 2, south of Johannesburg, last week. It was a joint venture between the SMLC and Gauteng government.

Nqobo said the council had warned the illegal occupants that it would deal with them severely if they continued to erect shacks on the land.

“We will not tolerate any illegal invasion of land and if they (squatters) persist, the council will have no option but to take legal action against them,” Nqobo said.

He said the demolished shacks had been vacant and the council suspected that somebody had erected them in order to sell them.

“As council we have a duty to combat any action undermining our efficiency,” he said.

Nqobo said a large portion of the land was dolomite and the SMLC had no intention of declaring it a residential area because the sinkholes posed a serious danger to the lives of the people.

He revealed that the land belonged to the Gauteng government but was on the process of being transferred to the SMLC.

According to SMLC strategic executive for corporate services Mr Greg Daniels the council had a legal right to demolish and confiscate the shacks.

“Although the council has not planned what it will do with the land after the transfer has been completed, it must protect it against any illegal invaders,” Daniels said.

Chairman of the Enderdale and Surrounding Civic Association, Mr Parok Jardine, said the council was unsympathetic to the plight of the homeless people because it had failed to seek alternative accommodation for them before evicting them.