18 December 2015

Dear Petitioners,

The news around Masi is not good. Please read the report below.

A protest march is apparently being planned.

We will do our best to keep you posted.

Yours,

Horst & Christine.

Authorities issue warnings after Cape Town land invasion

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Tammy Petersen, News24

Cape Town - Warning notices were distributed to Masiphumelele shackdwellers on Thursday after some started rebuilding their homes on SANParks-owned land, the City of Cape Town has confirmed.

This comes two days after 178 structures were removed by Law Enforcement, leading to clashes between residents and the authorities.

Rubber bullets were fired at residents on Tuesday when the SAPS, Law Enforcement and Metro Police removed the illegally erected structures, as well as approximately 1 600 pegs to mark where other shacks were to be built.

Community leader Chumani Ndinga told News24 that 259 adults were homeless after their new shacks were demolished.

"Our people are now forced to sleep in the bush, like baboons. We are not animals," he said.

"We have rights. How can they do this? It is a week before Christmas and people have nothing and nowhere to sleep. Is this how they treat human beings?"

Resident Bawuti Mlungiseleli said on Tuesday that the authorities "started firing rubber bullets at us, without any provocation".

"They showed no mercy. Among us were a heavily pregnant woman and a deaf, disabled resident. No consideration was even given to them," he said.

'Some started throwing stones'

But City of Cape Town executive director for safety and security Richard Bosman countered this.

"Some started throwing stones and threatening the officers and as a result, they opened fire," he said.

Vehicles were also damaged in the unrest, Bosman said.

According to the City, the attempts to build on the land were made by people who were not affected by the devastating blaze which occurred on November 29, destroying 1 123 homes.

But affected residents say the reason there is no space for them to rebuild is as a result of some fire victims building shacks larger than what they previously had.

Mayoral committee member for human settlements Benedicta Van Minnen said the proliferation of Masiphumelele 'cannot be afforded, as it will become more dense and therefore more prone to devastating fires", while also negatively affecting the delivery of basic and emergency services.

"The attempted illegal erection of structures on South African National Parks (SANParks) land, which is not suitable for habitation, is jeopardising this protected area," she said.

The attempted invasion of land earmarked for council’s Masiphumelele Phase 4 housing development would be to the detriment of the legitimate beneficiaries of this development, Van Minnen said.

'Illegally constructing structures'

She claimed the "attempted invasions" had been largely led by backyarder dwellers from the area not affected by the fire.

"The attempted illegal erection of structures have occurred on sites outside of the fire-affected area," she said.

"SANParks has an existing interdict against persons who invade or attempt to invade the State-protected land under their curatorship."

Prior to the action, many meetings took place with the group attempting to invade the land parcels in question, Van Minnen said.

"They were advised that they are illegally constructing structures and notices were issued to a number of the persons involved in the incidents of attempted illegal occupation.

"A rigorous registration process was undergone to ensure that the legitimate fire-affected residents receive building kits and were catered for in the redesign of the fire-affected area. A validation and cross-checking process followed to ensure the accuracy of the lists of legitimate beneficiaries."