



human settlements

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Press Release
29 November 2017

FORMER FEMALE WAR VETERAN RECEIVE PROPER SHELTER

An 87-year old former war-veteran Gogo Saida Sibitane couldn't hold her breath with excitement when she received her house from the Department of human Settlements yesterday in Mbangwane, Nkomazi Local Municipality. Sibitane who apparently left the country for Zambia and other neighbouring countries in the 80's described the then harsh realities of living as a female soldier to be difficult and an awful experience.

Part of the challenges included being ill-treated by the then apartheid government especially working as a female black person in the army, shortage of food and horrible living and working conditions. "I am grateful to have come back alive. There are so many things that we were deprived of unless one was in good relations with the ones in charge of the army only then you can get better treatment," narrated Sibitane who mentioned that when she left for her job as a young person there was never a proper living structure she left behind hence the need for one today.

The delivery forms part of the 22 houses that were handed over in the municipal jurisdiction by MEC Speed Mashilo on the day. This feat follows a rigorous programme by the Department to address housing needs for military veterans and honouring them for the role they played towards the attainment of this country's freedom. This is however, part of the overall number of 78 housing units to be constructed for military veterans by the Department during this financial year throughout the province in conjunction with the Department of Military Veterans.

The Programme is aimed at assisting and supporting them and their dependents for improved livelihoods. Sharing the same sentiments is 49-year old Mr Siphon Mathonsi, who joined in 1991 and served in exile for four years before returning home to join the MKMVA and later the SANDF. Mathonsi who is unapologetically proud to have contributed immensely to the country's freedom, says that he's now proud to have come home to such an amazing love and care from both the country and government as well as his family.

"It was however a bit painful to come home to a no proper house to accommodate all of my family members. I am so glad today that finally the Department has come through for us and we shall live safely and better onwards. I wish for this programme to continue assisting many others who participated in the country's attainment to freedom," acknowledged Mathonsi. MEC Speed Mashilo cheered the military veterans and advised them to take good care of their houses and not to sell them. The Department will however next week continue to rollout the programme in Bushbuckridge local Municipality where 26 units are expected to be handed over.

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