



human settlements

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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UmNyango
Wokuhlaliswa Kwabantu

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WAAIKRAAL COMMUNITY NOT FORGOTTEN

The need to address the plight of Waaikraal Community under Victor Khanye Local Municipality, in Mpumalanga Province is well within the plans of the Department of Human Settlements. This as a weekend newspaper on 5 November 2023 reported that the community is forgotten and neglected by government given the lack of services and general development in the area. To this end, the Department wishes to set the record straight in this regard and bring its own voice in the reporting that never solicited its comment.

Being mindful of the living conditions of over 500 people living in Waaikraal, in 2019 the local municipality made a request to the Department for the formalisation of the area as a precursor for development that was to follow. As such the Department responded to the request by appointing an implementing agent for the implementation of an Integrated Residential Development Programme (IRDP). The IRDP provides for planning and development of integrated housing projects.

The implementation of the IRDP in Waaikraal entailed township establishment, servicing of 2500 sites and the construction of top structures. However, this was met with challenges that requires a multi-pronged stakeholder intervention, to which the Department is currently ceased with. The project implementation could not commence as the area is subject to a lease agreement and land claim by the Mahamba Family. Until such time, the issue of the land claim is addressed the Department cannot proceed with its town planning processes or build houses in an area subject to formalisation.

The Department Spokesperson, Mr Freddy Ngobe decried the imbalanced reporting which never solicited comment from the Department. "We would have at least expected a media inquiry from the reporter, prior publishing an article that impugn government. That did not happen and we find the reporting unfair as we were denied right to reply", lamented Ngobe. Ngobe added that both Gogo Salaminah Mthimunye (77) and her daughter Margret Mthimunye (43) do not appear on the housing subsidised system. This is understandable in the case of the former as she has never applied before.

With regards to 27 household disaster relief beneficiaries, the contractor was appointed to work on repairs and construction of houses for the victims. However, there is no construction that can happen in their current sites as they are on a wet land and floodline susceptible to future flooding. A request has been made to the municipality to have these families moved to Botleng, however, the beneficiaries are on record saying that they are not willing to leave their ancestral land.

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